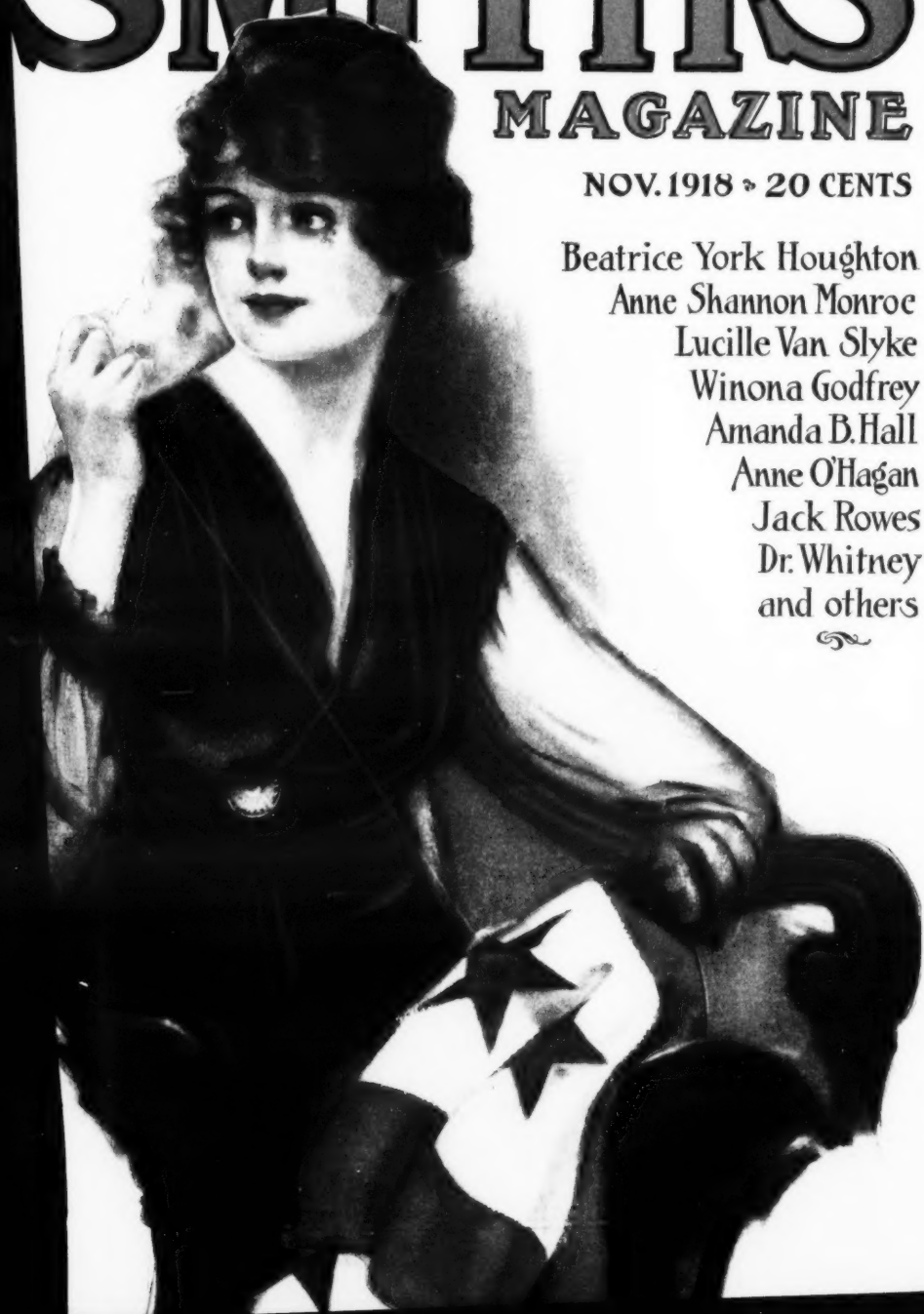


SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

NOV. 1918 • 20 CENTS

Beatrice York Houghton
Anne Shannon Monroe
Lucille Van Slyke
Winona Godfrey
Amanda B. Hall
Anne O'Hagan
Jack Rowes
Dr. Whitney
and others





DOWN at Washington stands the Nation's capitol. It is more than a pile of stone. It is a monument to an idea: "The people *are* the Government." Under no other idea is there so great an opportunity to work out individual prosperity and individual happiness.

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The menace of Hindenburg makes no American tremble. But it makes us grit our teeth and either fight or give! What the Government (which is the people) wants to borrow, we, the people, as individuals will lend.

The menace of Hindenburg shall cease to exist in the world even as a shadow; and we shall return to our individual pursuits under the protection of our national ideal successfully defended; and, please God, other nations, as the result of this struggle, shall join us and our already free Allies in the enjoyment of our blood-bought and blood-held freedom.

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No. 2

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A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

CONTENTS

FOR - - NOVEMBER - - 1918

Cover Design	Frederick Duncan	
The Hit of Her Career—Novelette	Jack Rowe	161
Illustrated by Robert A. Graef.		
Intimacy and Allure—Essay	Virginia Middleton	184
Flirtatious Mr. Haskins—Short Story	Lucile Van Slyke	187
Illustrated by Laura E. Foster.		
A Magdalen of Charing Cross—Verse	Anne Virginia Culbertson	196
The Answer in the Back of the Book	Anne Shannon Monroe	197
Novelette. Illustrated by Clarence Rowe.		
Opened by Censor—Verse	Mary Carolyn Davies	225
The Great C. P.—Short Story	Eliza Kent	226
Illustrated by Victor Perard.		
Allyn in Love—Short Story	Winona Godfrey	231
Illustrated by G. W. Harting.		
Laughing Eyes—Verse	L. M. Thornton	240
New York Stage Successes:	James Montgomery and	241
IV.—Going Up	Otto Harbach	
Illustrated with Photographs.		
The Tigress—Short Story	Beatrice York Houghton	257
Illustrated by E. A. Furman.		
Her Boy and Her Bit—Short Story	Margery Land May	265
Illustrated by H. D. Williamson.		
The Mentor and the Maid—Short Story	Frances Harmer	275
Illustrated by O' Carter.		
A Mother of Men—Short Story	Amanda B. Hall	281
The Wife of Asa Pincheon—Serial	Anne O'Hagan	289
Illustrated by E. C. Caswell.		
Intestinal Sluggishness	Doctor Lillian Whitney	316

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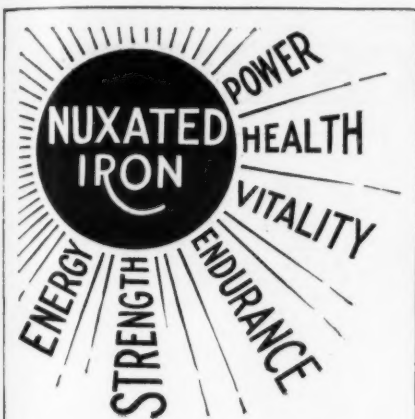
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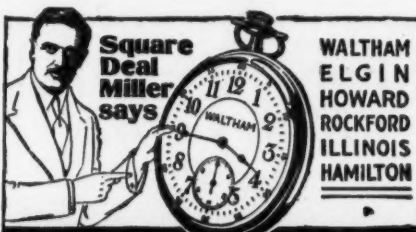
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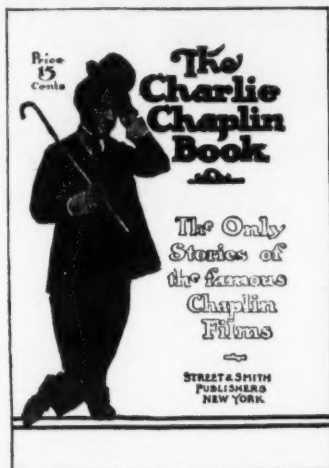
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 28

NOVEMBER, 1918

Number 2

The Hit of Her Career

By Jack Rowes

Author of "Bachelor Bait," "The Rambles of Rose," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

To say the least, it was a rather unusual and diverting evening for Jerry Potter! Mystery, thrills, adventure, allurements—you will find them all in this ingenious story.

THE speed through the summer midnight after the suffocating day in town obliterated the memory of the evening spent with a pair of fellow sufferers at a roof garden, the strident aural castigation of the jazz band at the "Tiptop Revue." The road stretched, macadam smooth, invitingly ahead, as Jerry Potter pressed the accelerator and the machine shot along, the only sound through the still night the muffled humming of the powerful motor. Cooling breezes from the Sound swept his bare head; glimpses of large country estates behind boxed hedges, perfumed scents from flowers in hidden gardens drowsing beneath the mellow moonlight, flashed by and vanished in sensuously satisfying panorama.

Potter was familiar with every estate by which he must pass. He gave a quick glance to his right as he slowed up to round a corner, noticed that the huge old-English mansion half obscured by trees was opened wide, with lights streaming from every window, and remembered that a certain bidding to go to an *al fresco* dance in aid of the Red Cross was lying at home on his desk.

1 S

He shrugged slightly as the strains of an Hawaiian orchestra cadenced across the lawn.

"Promised Lil I'd take tickets. Mustn't forget to send her a check tomorrow," he muttered, as he opened up speed again to shoot forward into the night.

"Wait, wait! Oh, stop! Won't you please stop?"

He heard the call, the anguish of the appeal, above the throbbing of the motor. A woman, swathed in pale gray, her figure all but indistinguishable against the banked foliage, stood at the side of the road. The brakes jammed down as Potter halted. The impetus carried the car beyond her, but she ran forward, her head turning constantly to watch the semicircular driveway that curved up to the house. As she ran up to him swiftly, he saw that she was of medium height and slenderly built.

"Are you—are you going to town?" queried the figure.

"I am," responded Potter promptly. "Can I be of service?"

He fancied that she gave a little gasp of relief.

"If you would be so kind as to let me

motor on just a short distance with you, until I can find a taxi—"

The dusk hid Potter's smile.

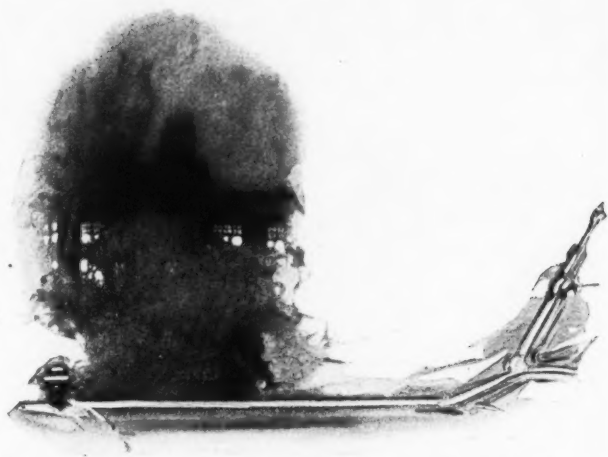
"I'm afraid you won't be able to get one out here at this time of night. This isn't Broadway, you know, but if you'll allow me to take you—ah—wherever you may happen to be going, the pleasure will be all mine, I assure you. I should have gone to this affair myself"—he nodded toward the festive house as he flung open the door of his machine—"but it completely slipped my mind. My name is Potter. The Bainbridges are old friends of mine."

Above the high chinchilla fur collar that muffled her up to the chin, the girl's eyes roved over the long, racing lines of the new sporting model; then she stepped into the roadster. As she settled herself beside him, Potter caught the swift glint of white feet beneath the long folds of her wrap. He leaned forward.

"I've a rug on the back of the seat," he suggested. "You'd better let me put it about you if you haven't carriage shoes."

He did not see the quick, furious flush that spread over her face quite up to her forehead as he tucked her up in the warm folds.

"It's a bit chilly after such a warm day," he went on, conscious of her embarrassment and speaking quite as if it were an ordinary occurrence with him



The brakes jammed down as Potter halted. "If you would be so kind
tance with you, until I can find

to pick up wandering maidens in distress on moonlit midnights, "and it's so easy to take cold after a dance."

The car rolled on as he spoke. The girl leaned forward, anxiously scanning the darkness behind them. The next instant they were running on high, although Potter kept the speed within comfortable conversational limits. As the house disappeared, succeeded by stretches of sunken Italian gardens, tennis courts, and wooded landscape, she relaxed into inarticulate relief.

"This is so kind of you," she finally forced herself to say, "to stop and take me along with you in this way. You must think this a perfectly mad way for me to act, but I simply had to get away from there quickly and there was no other way. I was obliged to ask the first motorists to take me on with them. I do hope you will pardon me and—and—understand—" She stammered, biting her lip behind the fur collar.

"Certainly," replied Potter hastily. "It's quite all right. Delighted, I'm sure, I happened to be on hand."



as to let me motor on just a short dis-
a taxi——”

If his slight pause indicated a desire that she enlighten his ignorance of her name, she did not respond to the unspoken suggestion, and they drove on in silence. Potter, his curiosity piqued by the peculiar vibrant emotion in her tones, hastily reviewed the situation.

Her voice, the lithe movements of her body as she had swung herself up into the seat beside him, betrayed the fact that she was young. The rest, swathed beneath her unrevealing evening wrap, remained a mystery. Run-away wife or eloping schoolgirl on some mad escapade, she offered no explanation of this sudden holdup. A girl of his own class by her cultured accents, why had she not asked some friend among the many who were at the dance to motor her to her home? Or, failing that, why had she not telephoned for a car from the station garage? He puzzled silently as they sped onward through moonlit spaces or beneath dark arches of woodland, the lights from the roadster's powerful reflectors wedges of radiance cleaving the darkness.

From her first proffered gratitude, the girl had sunk back into inertia, huddled low by his side, her chin thrust far down into the seclusion of her chin-chilla collar. Something in her attitude suggested desire for speed, and Potter subconsciously responded until the few remaining miles flashed by in quick photographic snatches of familiar landmarks. As they motored into the village, a clock from a church tower struck once.

Potter slowed down, turning to look at his mysterious guest. Large dark eyes flashed an answering response into his inquiring blue ones.

“This is Leasmere,” he said. “If you’ll tell me where you’d like me to take you——”

“Leasmere?” she asked curiously. “I

never heard of it. Is it a suburb of New York?"

He did not conceal his surprise. The question staggered him, for she had distinctly said something about going on to the town.

"Why, no, not a suburb. It's about thirty miles out. I thought you wanted to come here."

She flushed.

"I'm afraid you misunderstood," she explained with a catch in her voice. "But if you are going on, and can take me with you, I'd like to go all the way——" She broke off at his look of concern.

"Great Scott! It's my mistake! I thought you said you wanted to go to town."

"So I do. To New York." He fancied her white-slippered feet were tapping nervously on the floor of the car.

"My mistake," he repeated, "and a big one. I'm afraid I've taken you a good many miles out of your way, instead of having been a help to you. This is a long way in the opposite direction from the city. I'm most infernally sorry——"

"Not near New York! Thirty miles out! I—— Oh, what shall I do?"

Her eyes, startlingly big, searched Potter's clean-modeled, genial features, just now expressing lively solicitude.

"This is bad! Let me think——" he began, but she interrupted him desperately:

"I simply *can't* go back to the Bainbridges', and I *must* be in the city at ten in the morning. Can't I get a train here somewhere?"

She half rose, peering along the village street in search of a station. The robe covering her feet fell away as she did so.

Potter shook his head.

"There's none in until five o'clock, the early milk train, and you certainly can't wait here."

"If you'll drive me to a hotel!"—her

tones showed that she was tremulously near to tears—"I can stay there until it comes."

"Our village is a constant apology," said Potter slowly, "for a hotel is a luxury of which we've never been able to boast. We're a pretty close community, you see——"

"Then what *can* I do?" she cried wildly. "You can't drive me about all night in your car, and I—— Oh, I wish I were *dead*!"

To his horror, she turned, threw her arms over the back of the low seat, and buried her face in the depths of her gray draperies. A long, convulsive sob confirmed his fears. She was weeping with an abandon that threatened hysterics. Potter stared, his lips formed in a noiseless whistle.

"Great Scott! What a fix!" he silently commented to the unsympathetic front of the butcher's shop in front of which he had unconsciously halted. "What in the world am I to do with her? Now, see here, you mustn't feel so badly about it," he exclaimed aloud. "I'm horribly sorry I misunderstood, and it's all my fault for getting you into such a mess as this. But I'm going to see that you are fixed up all right, you know, so there's really nothing to worry about."

He paused, fascinated, as he gazed downward. The rug, which she had trodden down as she had flung herself away, lay massed on the floor. Outlined upon it, gleaming white against the dark folds, rested a small, perfectly modeled bare foot. Potter stared, unbelieving, entranced. What? His eyes, hypnotized, traveled up the high-arched instep to the slimly turned ankle, the lovely, pure lines of the tenderly rounded limb, the skin the texture of magnolia blooms under the moon's rays. Just below the knee the gray wrap discreetly concealed further revelations.

Potter's involuntary breath of amazement was inaudible beneath the sudden

violence of the girl's pent-up sobs. From the buried head issued a series of sounds that brought his benumbed mental faculties back to the consideration of her plight. His quick assump-

displays of hysteria, Potter sat helpless before the attack. At last it wore on his nerves, became unbearable. He drew out a pocket flask, uncorking it, and a rich aroma rose on the night air.

"Better try to sip of this, Miss—ah— Oh, well, just take a little, anyhow," he urged. "Then I'll drive you anywhere you like—back to the city if you prefer. But if you'll allow me to offer you my hospitality for the night, I'll be delighted to entertain you as my guest."



"Anything to eat, Taro?" asked Potter. The Jap grinned. "Plenty in-a ice box, but honorable Missie Hyde, she no here."

tion of responsibility for the misunderstanding, the touch of real interest in his kindly expressed contrition, had been the one straw necessary to break down her thin veneer of control. She wept on, deep, shuddering sighs alternating with nervous shivering as the emotion spent itself, then gathered for another outburst. Unused to feminine

For an instant her sobs ceased, and she raised her head.

"Y-you?" she asked.

He colored, but his gaze held hers steadfastly.

"My place isn't six miles from here," he explained. "My aunt keeps things running, and I usually come out for week-ends. She'll be delighted to take care of you, and I'll run you back to the city in the morning or you can take the train in, as you prefer. This is really all my fault, you know, so please let me make what amends I can for my bungling."

"But that's out of the question! I can't descend on you, on your aunt, at this time of night!" she objected.

"Not at all," he responded cheerfully, as he started the car. "She'll be delighted to put you up, I'm sure."

Which, from the misgivings in his mind engendered by the unique pedal display of a moment before, showed Potter to be a man of courage, for auntie was of good old New England descent, her puritanic austerity equaled only by her sense of the proprieties. A pleasant little bachelor suite on Park Avenue, where he lived between week-ends, helped out a little, but to arrive with a mysterious demoiselle after one a.m.—His sense of humor revived at the thought of the reception awaiting them.

A furtive movement from the girl, as she drew the rug up over her knees, brought him back sharply. Thunder! How was he to get her into the house and up to her room without the amazing discovery by his aunt of her unusual lack of peripatetic attire? Girls' dancing gowns were so infernally short now, and—how had she gotten away with it at the dance, anyhow?

His head in a whirl, Potter scarcely heard her whispered words of gratitude as they hummed up a short drive, stopped beneath a porte-cochère, and Potter, bending over, opened the door.

"Perhaps you'd better take the robe along," he suggested in as nonchalant a manner as he could muster. "It may be cold inside—going into the house, you know."

To his relief, as she stood up, the folds of her gray wrap reached to the ground, and she held it in such a manner that it concealed the telltale lack of hosiery. She got out swiftly, and Potter followed, careful not to notice her awkward stumble up the steps in her furtive efforts to keep the drapery close around her.

They crossed the wide veranda with its swinging seats and cushioned wicker chairs, and Potter, producing his night key, unlocked the door. It swung wide, revealing the artistic, homy interior, the semigloom lightened by shaded bulbs within a bronze electrolier.

The girl's glance, wandering curiously over the silken mosque rug hanging over the balustrade of the stairway, was suddenly arrested by a moving object. Her quick exclamation brought Potter, who was closing the door, to her side. He smiled as he recognized the object of her alarm.

"My man, Taro. I sent him down here this afternoon," he explained, as the soft-footed Oriental pushed an electric button, flooding the hall with veiled brilliance.

"Anything to eat, Taro?" asked Potter.

The Jap grinned.

"Plenty in-a ice box, but honorable Missie Hyde, she say——"

"That's my aunt. Perhaps I'd best go up and rap on her door," explained Potter hastily, but the Japanese interposed:

"Missie Hyde no here. She have telephone, jus' before dinner, and she go off c'ick, catch train. She say I tell you she go see her honorable bruvver. He in New York for day and want see her. So she go Biltmore Hotel to meet him. She not come back here till Monday."

"Uncle Ned on one of his sudden trips here from St. Louis," said Potter. "I see."

His eyes fell meditatively on the girl.

She had turned down the forbiddingly high collar, and for the first time he saw her face, childishly attractive even in its pallor. The dark eyes seemed startlingly big as she turned them full upon him.

"Your aunt is—not here?" she asked faintly.

He saw the droop of the red lips, the trembling of her hands as she fumbled again at the collar. As he reviewed the situation, he made his decision swiftly.

"It's mighty unfortunate she should have taken just this time to go to the city, but we'll try to make you comfortable here, just the same. We've a couple of maids in the house, and one of them has been with my aunt so long she really acts as housekeeper. Go and call Sarah, Taro"—he nodded to the beady-eyed Oriental—"and tell her to get one of the guest chambers ready and to wait up there for a young lady who will be up as soon as she has had a bite of something to eat. And tell Sarah to make up a bed for herself in the next chamber, so that she can be within call if the guest should require anything during the night. Then come back and find us some supper. This young lady should have some hot bouillon. You'll take some, won't you?" he asked, as the servant vanished silently.

Her lips moved, but no words came. He came close to her, looking directly into her eyes.

"It's the only thing to do," he said quietly. "You can't get back to-night unless I run you in, and you're pretty well played out. The sensible thing for you is to get a good sleep, and in the morning I'll see you get into the city to meet your appointment. If you insist, of course I'll motor you back to-night, but you must certainly eat something first."

"No, no!" she interrupted quickly. "Of course I can't let you take such a long trip over again, and I do appreciate

all you've done—are doing—for me, I do, indeed, but—you know——"

"I realize just how disagreeable all this must be for you," he agreed readily, "but Sarah is really old enough and of sufficient importance to make a proficient chaperon and—— Why didn't I think of it before?" His exclamation was sharp with self-criticism. I'll telephone to Lil—Mrs. Bainbridge—and motor you back there to spend the night if you prefer."

"Mrs. Bainbridge! Oh, no, I can't go back there! Please—please don't call them up!"

Her look stopped while it puzzled him. He saw that the hands tightly clasping the wrap were trembling from some high tension of emotion, that the small head, while held valiantly erect, evidenced a spiritual, rather than a physical, strength. A swift impulse of tenderness swept over him. He moved toward her involuntarily, his hand outstretched.

"You're tired out, and cold," he said kindly. "Let me take your wrap, and Taro will start up a wood fire. Supper shall be served in the living room. The ride over was chilly after the hot day, and I'm afraid you're feeling it."

She shrank back, seeming to become smaller as he advanced.

"No, no, thank you," she stammered. "I won't take off my wrap."

The appearance of Taro at that instant turned Potter's curiosity regarding her refusal, a curiosity that not unnaturally quickened into abnormal activity as his mind reverted to that flash of white she had unwittingly revealed.

"Start the fire in the living room," he called to the Japanese, "and serve supper there immediately, for one."

The unconscious shrinking, the question in her eyes, evinced the embarrassment under which his guest was struggling. He regarded her with characteristic frankness.



"I'm going upstairs now, and will send Sarah down to you. If there's anything you need to make you comfortable, she'll get it. This is the living room."

He drew aside a velvet hanging, and the girl passed irresolutely into a large room done in old blues and mahogany. Over at one end, Taro was applying a match to the freshly laid wood fire. They moved across, the girl sinking down into a deeply cushioned chair at one side of the wide fireplace.

Potter stood silently looking down at her, his hands thrust deep in his pockets. She glanced up at him, noticing for the first time the quiet strength of his compact figure, the few gray hairs among the closely cropped brown, that touch of premature gray which, oddly enough, lends attraction to masculinity while detracting from women of a corresponding age. She felt and re-

He drew a quick breath. There, on the brown bearskin covering his hearth, a woodland nymph held out bare, lovely arms to the dancing flames.

sponded to his genial charm in spite of the fact that she must have been wholly ignorant that this was one of the exclusive suburb's most eligible bachelors—moneyed, well connected, popularly known by men as a "good fellow," by women as the most irritatingly elusive, yet desirable, catch in their set. He bowed slightly as he met her gaze.

"I'll bid you good night. If there's anything you'd like that Taro forgets to bring in, please ask him for it. I do hope you'll get that good night's rest."

With a formal nod, he left her. Her eyes followed his figure as he swung out into the hall; then she leaned forward, holding her hands to the blaze. Taro vanished silently. With a swift glance about her, she saw that she was alone. Fumbling at the clasp of her wrap, she let it fall from her as she stood up, the heat from the crackling flames warming her from shivering tension into sensuous relaxation. Thus Potter, realizing that he had omitted to ask her at what time in the morning she would want the machine, paused in amazement on the threshold when he returned a few moments later.

He drew a quick breath. There, on the brown bearskin covering his hearth, a woodland nymph held out bare, lovely arms to the dancing flames. Her unbound hair—a warm chestnut caught by pearl fillets—fell over her creamy shoulders to the supple waist, where the double Grecian girdle confined the clinging, flowing lines of the diaphanous white drapery. But it was the modeling of the figure—graceful as an intaglio from ancient Mycenæ—that brought a quick exclamation to his lips. He caught it back, the explanation occurring to him suddenly.

"One of the girls who has taken up æsthetic dancing. My word, what a beauty! That explains the lack of ho-siery, of course. Lil must have given some sort of an exhibition of fancy

dancing on her lawn. It's quite the rage at all outdoor affairs just now. Why didn't I go, instead of wasting the evening at the Roof Garden? It would be worth a dozen tickets to see such a girl in the abandon of the Greek dances. *Georgé!* What a pose!"

As if feeling the influence of his gaze, the girl stirred, lifted her big, dark eyes from the burning logs, and stared across the room out through the windows. The shades were half drawn, but she looked steadily, as if fascinated. Suddenly her lids narrowed, her vision concentrating on one spot.

Potter, aware that his presence would be intrusive, quietly stepped back into the hall, intending to send his message by Sarah. And then he heard her shriek—a terrified scream that startled every nerve in his body into action. With one stride, he swung into the room. The slim white figure stood, swaying uncertainly, fear expressed in every line.

"There, there!" she exclaimed as Potter entered. "At the window! I saw—a face!"

She clutched at a chair excitedly. Potter strode to the window, threw it wide, and thrust head and shoulders outside.

"No one there," he said briefly as he returned to full view.

"But I saw—some one I thought I knew—"

She broke off in confusion. He came to her, taking the hands she held out in unconscious appeal. He scanned her closely.

"There's absolutely no one there," he said gently. "It must have been just a trick of your nerves."

She shook her head.

"No, no, I saw—him," she ended brokenly.

"Him? Who?" asked Potter quickly. "Has some one been annoying you?"

She looked down.

"Y—yes. I owe you an apology, an



—the scantily draped, lovely young Greek nymph, and the man socially known as "handsome Jerry Potter" wheeling about to meet the intruder.

explanation. I should have told you at once who I am, why I stopped you, but somehow—I couldn't." Her words, once unloosed, poured forth in a flood. "I'm a student at the Duquesne School of Æsthetic Culture—dancing, you know"—Potter nodded comprehension, as he released her hands—"and I was engaged to give an exhibition of solo dancing for this Red Cross affair. I

didn't know any one there—I am from Ohio, you see, just a pupil in New York—and between my solos, I rested in Mrs. Bainbridge's dressing room.

"It was all right until—until—he came in. Then, because I am a dancer, I suppose, he—misunderstood—and—I couldn't get rid of him. There was no place I could go where he couldn't follow. And after my last dance, when I

was to have gone home, I found that some one had taken my street suit—and things—out of Mrs. Bainbridge's room, and no one could find them.

"That made me lose my train, the last one into town. I told Mrs. Bainbridge about it—that my clothes must have been mixed up with some of the guests' or the servants have carried them away by mistake. She was very kind and said I must spend the night with them. Just as she said it, I caught a strange look in his eyes—he was there—and it all flashed over me. He had stolen my things because he wanted me to lose my train! I—oh, I was so annoyed, so angry! But I was afraid, too, afraid—"

She paused, quivering at the memory. Potter, his emotions ranging from amazement to hot wrath, put in a word.

"He? Do you mean that one of their guests was annoying you? Why didn't you tell Mrs. Bainbridge? She'd have finished him in short order."

"I—I couldn't." She looked away from his candid gaze. "It would have been impossible, quite impossible—for me to have told her who it was. He wasn't a guest."

"Surely you wouldn't be afraid to report any servant—"

He paused. Something in her attitude, her aversion, told him the truth.

"Jove! You don't mean—Jim Bainbridge!"

Her delicate skin rouged in the surging tide of color. He scanned her curiously. The girl was undoubtedly sincere, in spite of her preposterous assertion.

"There's some mistake here," he began slowly. "I've known him from prep days, and Jim isn't that sort. There's no whiter man living. He's as close to me as a brother. In fact, Mrs. Bainbridge—Lillian—is my sister."

He watched the dark eyes flare with astonishment, saw her embarrassment at his announcement.



"Hello, Jerry! Sorry if I've butted in at the wrong time, but I thought you were alone, of course."

"Your sister? Oh, what have I done?" Her quick concern was acute.

"Made some kind of a mistake," he reiterated. "I'd stake everything I have on Jim. He's straight. Are you sure, absolutely sure, that was the man's name?"

"Absolutely. I heard Mrs. Bainbridge—your sister—speak of him as 'Mr. Bainbridge.' Besides, what other man would be there in her dressing room?"

Her guileless question was out before she saw the innuendo. She bit her lip

as Potter turned to pace up and down the floor, his brows knit puzzledly. Taro, gliding through the hall, discreetly drew the velvet hangings separating it from the living room.

"What's that for, Taro?" Potter's tone was sharp.

"Ring at door, sare." There was a hint of a smile on Taro's lips. "Must be honorable Missie Aunt come back."

"Oh, all right," said Potter hastily.

He listened in some anxiety for the opening of the door. A masculine voice somewhat relieved him.

"Evening, Taro. Mr. Jerry home? Saw a light in the living room as I motored up. All right, I'll go in."

Evidently paying no attention to Taro's quick "No, no, sare! Wait here, ple'se!" the visitor pushed back the curtains and entered. He stood for a moment studying the scene revealed to him—the scantily draped, lovely young Greek nymph over at the fireplace, the man socially known as "handsome Jerry Potter" wheeling about to meet the intruder. A smile lifted the scarlet lips beneath the small, dark mustache as his quick glance roved over the two. Immaculately groomed in evening dress, he looked the habitually laconic man-about-town to whom such situations were of not infrequent occurrence.

"Hello, Jerry! Sorry if I've butted in at the wrong time, but I thought you were alone, of course. Can you give me five minutes? Lil sent me over—didn't want to use the phone for fear central would let the news leak and the papers get hold of it. She's in a blue funk—lost that pearl necklace she had last Christmas. Stolen, of course."

"My word! Not that string from Cartier's!" exclaimed Potter.

The other nodded.

"Cost five thousand. Some row going on, believe me! She wants you to get that man you know in on it—that detective fellow—Reed, I think, is his name—and hold the police off a bit.

Wants everything kept quiet. No notoriety, you know, Lil's idea. Mighty little to work on, and a big crowd there all evening."

He shook his head dubiously; then again allowed his glance to travel over to the picturesque figure by the fireplace. Taro, wheeling in a tea wagon laden with fragile china from which issued delectable supper odors, paused beside the girl as he lighted the individual chafing dish containing the chicken à la king. Potter, recovering himself, moved toward his visitor.

"Come up into my den and we'll talk this over," he began hurriedly, but the other cut in suavely:

"Don't let me interrupt this little supper, Jerry! Sorry I had to butt in just now, but Lil thought you'd probably be here."

He met Potter's stare with the slightest possible contraction of his own right eyelid. Potter, to his disgust, felt the blood rising to his face. The girl, whose gaze had not left the man's face since his entrance, shuddered slightly.

"Nonsense, Bainbridge! This supper has nothing to do with me. It's for Miss—a—"

He paused, his ignorance of his guest's name adding to his discomfort. Bainbridge broke the awkward silence with easy urbanity.

"Miss Dorothy Morton, I believe, who gave us a remarkably unique interpretation of classic dances to-night. Tremendously interesting, especially that last one—'Flame!' Some abandon and pep! But of course you don't have to be told how she can dance, Jerry."

He bowed and moved over to the girl, his admiration plainly evident. She raised her dark-lashed eyes, looking straight into his small, too regular features, making no motion to touch his outstretched hand. He covered her rebuff with an easy laugh as he drew out his cigarette case, then turned to face Potter with forced joviality.



"And I suppose it's a lie that Mr. Potter saw me take it out from beneath your back hair? Better not try to bluff us any longer, little one. Your game has fallen, through."

"Where's* your hospitality, old man? Why not invite me to have a drink and let me tell the news here? I'm sure Miss Morton will be interested, for the robbery occurred in the very room she was resting in during most of the evening. Lil has her safe built into the wall of her dressing room, you know."

He lounged down into a chair beside Dorothy's as he spoke, his patent-leathered feet outstretched on the bearskin.

"Thanks. A good, stiff highball for me, Taro," he ordered, as the Japanese waited silently after serving a steaming cup of bouillon to Dorothy.

A curt nod from Potter, and Taro disappeared. Potter came forward unwillingly, dropping down into the seat at the other corner of the fireplace opposite Miss Morton. She had drawn the discarded gray wrap around her, transforming herself from classic to modern attractiveness.

"Here's all we know about it," said Bainbridge, his black eyes fastened on the leaping flames. "Lil was dressed when, at the last moment before she had to go down to receive her guests, she decided to wear the pearls. The maid got them out of the safe and put them around Lil's neck; but she didn't like the effect, with the gown she was wearing, and finally told Suzette to lock them up again.

"Just as she thrust them into the jewel case, Lil called to her that guests had arrived and Suzette must go into the chamber reserved for ladies and help them remove their wraps—that she would lock the jewels up herself. And then I believe you, Miss Morton"—he cast a glance at the gray-swathed figure—"arrived, and Mrs. Bainbridge forgot the unlocked safe in arranging about your dances. She gave you the use of her dressing room during the evening. Thus the safe remained open for some hours, until after many of the guests had gone, in fact, and Suzette, coming in to mend Mrs. Bainbridge's gown,

which she had torn while dancing, discovered the open safe and the theft of the necklace.

"Your exhibition had concluded and you had already left, Miss Morton, else we should have asked you if any one had entered the room during the time you rested there. Of course, if any one had been watching for their chance, they would have waited until you left, then slipped in and taken the jewels. Fortunately no other valuables were missing. It's lucky I happened to find you here, for I know Mrs. Bainbridge would like to talk with you herself. Perhaps you'll motor her over in the morning, Jerry?"

"I've promised Miss Morton she shall be in the city by ten o'clock," said Potter. "And, by the way, I want to explain how she happens to be here to-night. I came along just as she discovered she had lost the last train into town, and offered her Aunt Carrie's hospitality for the night. When we arrived, Taro informed us she had gone into the city to meet Uncle Ned. It was too late to run back to New York, so Sarah is trying to make her comfortable until to-morrow."

Although Potter's irritation was admirably concealed, Bainbridge evidently sensed it, and the situation amused him, for a certain astute air tinged his manner. Potter, recognizing it, involuntarily clenched his hands, but Taro, appearing at that instant carrying a tray laden with glasses, club soda, and pale-hued bottles, interrupted further discussion. Bainbridge waved him toward Miss Morton.

"Ladies first, Taro! You'll join us, of course?" he asked.

"Thank you, no." Her low tones were decisive.

"You will, anyhow, Jerry?"

Potter nodded assent, and Taro, mixing the liquids to each man's taste, withdrew.

"Won't you take advantage of your

sex's privilege and relent, Miss Morton?"

Bainbridge, rallying from his languid indifference, rose and presented his glass to her. She looked up.

"I don't care for it——" she began.

"Oh, come now, you must be fagged from dancing, and this will set you up. Come on, join us. Be the good little sport you always are! This won't be the first time we've drunk a toast together, you know!" He leaned over her, his tone lightly bantering.

"I've made it a rule never to drink anything but Apollinaris."

"Is that what they always serve you in a teacup at those jolly little studio parties!" he laughed. "Oh, I say, I'm sorry!"

His exclamation was drowned in her cry of dismay as she bent down, snatching away the gray-satin drapery, as the glass, slipping from his fingers, spun wildly to the floor. With lightning rapidity, Bainbridge's hand descended on the mass of curling hair bound in on the back of her neck by the Greek fillet. She cried out as he lifted it—whether from surprise or terror, Potter, who was watching, could not determine; but he saw a long line of white flash through the air as Bainbridge triumphantly flung up his hand. It was the missing pearl necklace.

He let it dangle from his fingers for a moment, the firelight glow tinting the perfectly matched pearls into iridescent opacity. His glance shot from the girl, who had sprung to her feet and stood facing him, over to the amazed Potter.

"Sorry, Jerry, to have to resort to such melodramatic methods, but there was no question that this girl had stolen it, and I had a pretty fair idea where she'd stowed them. Not much spare space to hide them in this costume, was there, Doll? Your hair is so confoundingly thick, and has so many pearls twined in it, one string more or less

wouldn't be noticed even if it showed a bit. Pretty clever, but you didn't get away with it this time. Your professional début will have to be postponed for some time, I'm afraid."

In an agony of appeal, the girl threw out her hands to Potter, who had risen. He lifted the necklace from Bainbridge's hand, recognized the jewels, and silently returned it. She flamed from pallor into scarlet misery before the look in his eyes.

"I *didn't* take them!" she protested wildly. "I've never even *seen* this necklace before! It's all a lie, an infamous story, because this——"

A sardonic smile lifted the corners of Bainbridge's neat little mustache, as he cut in dryly:

"And I suppose it's a lie that Mr. Potter saw me take it out from beneath your back hair? Better not try to bluff us any longer, little one. Your game has fallen through. I have a witness, you know. You did see me pull out the string, Jerry?"

"I saw you pounce on her head as she bent over to save her coat from the highball," said Potter slowly, "and when you held up your hand, the pearls were in it."

"But he couldn't have taken them out from my hair, for they were never in there!" cried Miss Morton, and some quality in her voice checked Potter's rising disgust. "I *didn't* take them! I'm *not* a thief! Mr. Bainbridge is only trying to——"

"Cut it out!" ordered Bainbridge decisively. "There's no use in making a scene, Dolly. You think you can get away with a whole lot of deviltry because you're a whirlwind of a dancer and as pretty as a witch, but this was too big a thing for you to carry through. Rather out of your line, anyhow, don't you think? Better stick to accumulating valuables in some more legitimate way. I guess we'd better be going along, Jerry, for she'll be safer where

we can keep her under lock and key ourselves. Come on, Dolly, put on your cape." He motioned to the wrap which had fallen from the furious young figure confronting him.

"I *won't* go off alone with you! It's all lies, lies, trumped up to injure me! I never *saw* those pearls before! Oh, Mr. Potter"—she turned to Jerry, who had been watching the scene with curiously narrowing gaze—"I know it's asking a great deal, but won't you—can't you—try to believe what I say? If you saw him take that necklace from me, it was because some one had placed it there when I did not know——"

She paid no attention to Bainbridge's explosive "Oh, cut it out! What stuff!" but plunged on eagerly: "Or because *he had them in his hand* before he touched me! I believe he took them himself! That must be it! He did it on purpose! He is the thief, not I! He's trying to hurt me because I——"

With swift ferocity, Bainbridge's hands descended on her shoulders and clutched them, his fingers biting deep into the flesh as he shook her savagely.

"That will be enough from you, you little tiger cat!" he began through clenched teeth.

"Stop that! Let her go! Are you mad?" exclaimed Potter. Then, seeing that Bainbridge was apparently past articulate speech, he pinioned his arms from behind, effectively releasing Miss Morton.

For an instant, she gazed into Potter's eyes, black with anger.

"I didn't do it! On my honor, I swear I didn't!" she said, the white heat of passion verifying her words.

"I believe you," he answered quietly.

He saw the light that sprang into her eyes. Then, sinking down into the wide armchair, she relaxed into an agony of tears, her head bent low upon her knees.



Bainbridge writhed free.

Bainbridge, evidently exasperated to the point of madness, wheeled around on Potter.

"You keep out of this, Jerry! Do you know who this girl is? I'll bet you don't, unless you've met her at some of those cute little studio parties where I picked her up. You know what they are—a mixing place for all kinds of bohemians. Her æsthetic-culture school runs them ostensibly to prepare the pupils for public appearances, but most

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She tightened the folds and hung on valiantly to the swaying, plunging figure.

of the patrons are society dames who go there to meet some *matinée* idol with whom they're carrying on a clandestine affair, or artists who are after new figures to pose for them. And among that crowd she is known as 'Doll,' the most popular of the studio hostesses."

Something in Potter's glance gave him pause momentarily. His manner subtly changed.

"I don't know as she's so much to be

blamed, after all," he added. "She's young and out for a good time, and she's getting it. Kirkpatrick, the artist, is crazy about her. She's to pose for his next exhibit study, I believe."

Potter looked at the bowed head. She shook it vigorously, and his glance came back to Bainbridge.

"She's probably been hitting the high spots and is hard up for cash, and when she saw the expensive gowns and jewels there to-night, which the real kind of women wear"—Bainbridge broke off with an expressive shrug—"it was too much for her. Why, even that coat she has on isn't her own. It belongs to Janet Warren. I saw her wear it in herself when she first arrived to-night. She can't deny she stole *that*, anyhow!" he ended caustically.

There was a short, pulsating silence.

Then the girl raised her head. She looked past Bainbridge straight into Jerry Potter's commiserating gaze. In the fireplace a log broke, crackled, then smoldered to flame-red ash.

"I took this wrap"—she enunciated each word with distinct clarity—"because, as I told you, my own clothing could not be found. Although Mrs. Bainbridge invited me to spend the night, I knew that I must get out of the

house at once. I couldn't tell her why I must refuse her hospitality, so I allowed her to think I would stay. I knew the—the man whom I told you about”—Bainbridge raised his head with curious alertness—“was waiting to get a word with me. I went into the chamber reserved for guests, caught up the first wrap I saw, and escaped down the servants' staircase. I had been using that all evening, you see, to get out onto the lawn where I gave my exhibition dances. I knew he was watching for me, but hoped to get away before he could guess my intention and follow. You know the rest.”

She paused and a scarlet tide rose to her cheeks as she summoned all her courage.

“And I am not the—what he is trying to make you think I am. I am studying at the studio to learn to support myself by solo exhibitions of aesthetic dancing. I'm poor, but I'm not—fast, nor have I ever taken anything that is not mine—until to-night, when I was obliged to borrow this coat. After my return to the city, I should have rung up Mrs. Bainbridge and asked her to whom it belonged. I—I am very tired.” She swayed a trifle. “Will you ask him to leave me now and—and go away, please?”

“I'll go, certainly, but you'll come along, too,” stated Bainbridge grimly.

“If Miss Morton prefers to stay here, she stays,” said Potter firmly. “She needs a good night's rest, and she's going to have fair play in this affair. Lillian can talk with her to-morrow. I'll be responsible for her.”

Bainbridge stared.

“You mean——”

“That there's a whole lot about this thing I don't like,” answered Potter. “She told me a few things before you happened in and——” He hesitated, for Dorothy's eyes were beseeching him to stop.

“I see,” said Bainbridge, a cynical

smile twisting his lips. “Sorry all this happened at such an inopportune time, Jerry. All right, I'll run along. Lil will be glad enough to get her pearls back, but what the devil am I to tell her? That I found Doll with them hidden in her back hair, and that she's spending the night here?”

His innuendo, the amusement in his glance, fired some hidden volcanic crater hitherto unguessed in Potter's nature. With a sudden revulsion to the primitive, scarlet rage blinded him. The next instant, his hands reached for and found Bainbridge's throat. More lightly built, he reeled back from the unexpected impact. Dorothy's scream rang out sharply as Bainbridge, struggling to free himself, struck out wildly.

“Oh! Oh!” she cried. “Stop! Stop, please, Mr. Potter! Let him go! Oh, do let him go! You must! You're killing him!”

But Potter was too far gone to heed her pleading. Something had been rising within him since the first time the big brown eyes, with their soft shading of long lashes, had looked into his. And now, with his hands on Bainbridge's windpipe, the emotion crystallized into action. He shook the violently resisting figure savagely.

“So *you're* the rotter who's been hunting her! She told me the whole story. Wanted to force her to listen to your insults, did you? Then, when she gave you the slip, you thought you'd work up a scheme to get even with her! I'd like to shake the life out of you, you miserable cur!”

Something soft, silken, yet sufficiently muffling to obscure vision completely descended over Potter's head. Miss Morton, creeping up behind him, had dexterously blinded him with the evening wrap. She tightened the folds and held on valiantly to the swaying, plunging figures. Bainbridge, taking advantage of a loosened hold, writhed free.

"Let go. I'll make him see reason!" he gasped. "You've proved your pluck, all right. I'm satisfied. You'll make good, after this."

The girl's hold relaxed, and the satin folds, released, fell from Jerry Potter's head. He emerged, slightly dazed, to see Bainbridge shaking hands with the flushed Miss Morton. She threw him a shy glance.

"Shall we tell him?" she asked.

Bainbridge drew down his cuffs and straightened his necktie.

"Guess an apology as well as some explanation is due him," he answered. "See here, Jerry——"

"No apology you can offer can mend matters!" exclaimed Potter with heat. "I can see the whole frame-up. When she said Jim had been annoying her, I knew she'd got it wrong. The same name mixed her up. I might have known it was his cousin, not Jim, she meant. Her mistake misled me. I haven't known you very well, for you've lived mostly in California, but I must say I've never thought you a rotter."

"He isn't! Oh, please, Mr. Bainbridge, I may tell him, may I not?"

She appealed very sweetly to the young man, who was still tenderly nursing his larynx. He nodded, with a feeble attempt at his former debonaire manner.

"Well, what is it?" asked Potter shortly. A curious inertia, which he attributed to his unusual outburst, possessed him, almost akin to a foreboding of impending calamity.

A sudden shyness enveloped the girl.

"Why, you see. I—I'm a dancer——" she began haltingly; then stopped without any further attempt at enlightenment.

Bainbridge, satisfied that his epiglottis had sustained no permanent injury, filled in the pause.

"And she wanted to get into the movies," he said briskly. "So, when I

applied to the Duquesne School for dancers, they recommended her to me. I have a big open-air studio outside Los Angeles where my company works, you know. Her dancing is all right, but she'll have to be able to act, too, and as she's had no stage experience, I hesitated, for I had no way of knowing if she had talent and nerve. So when I found she was engaged to exhibit at Lil's dance to-night, this scheme suddenly occurred to me. I told her, if she could put it through, I'd engage her. She has, and she's got the job. You're a clever little actress"—he nodded to Miss Morton—"and I think there's no question but what you've got nerve, all right."

"But—how——" stammered Potter.

"Why did I select you as the goat?" queried Bainbridge. "Well, Jerry, I knew you were Jim's friend, and I took the chance. We all have to do that sometimes. The whole thing was cooked up, for I knew what time you'd motor past on your way home to-night and we were on the lookout. But if we'd found we—ah—had made a mistake, Miss Morton knew I was ^{not} far behind in my machine at any time."

Potter looked at the girl, but she was gazing fixedly into the fire. He stared at her an instant; then slowly turned back to Bainbridge.

"Sorry if I hurt you," he forced himself to say. "If I'd had any idea you were in the film business, I might not have been quite such an easy mark. My compliments, if all your movie stars are as clever actresses as Miss Morton."

"Mr. Potter, I——"

The expression in his eyes which had goaded her into speech stopped her as abruptly. Shame for herself, admiration for Potter, mingled with an emotion peculiarly disturbing because she could give it no name, scorched her face as she again gave her attention to the flames.

"They have to be, to make good," re-

plied Bainbridge laconically. "And we have to work up all sorts of schemes to test them out, if they're inexperienced. This wasn't such a fool idea, after all, for she's shown she isn't easily rattled. We're going to film a big picture on Greek mythology, and there'll be scenes of nymphs dancing in gardens while wild beasts wander about, so I had to be sure she wouldn't weaken. No invidious reflections intended, Jerry."

He laughed with good-natured railery. Dorothy Morton, summoning her courage, turned to Potter, an adorable pink flush on her cheeks, her dark-lashed eyes penitent.

"I'm afraid you think we went too far—that I shouldn't have agreed to play such a part," she said softly.

"Any criticism from me would be mere impertinence," he answered gravely, but the subtle flattery of her deepening blush was not wholly lost on him.

"I want to explain as fully as I can," she pursued bravely, the desire to clear herself and win back this man's regard urging her on. "I see now this was a mad thing for me to attempt, but it appealed to me because it seemed such an easy way to show Mr. Bainbridge just what I can do—a test that was perfectly safe for me because—because the other Bainbridges know you so intimately. We had everything planned—that he should come in and make a scene, accusing me of stealing the necklace—but we had no idea, of course, you would—ah—try to hurt him."

"No," interrupted Bainbridge ruefully. "I'm afraid I underestimated the realism of my talent for portraying the villain. I played the part in order to offer Miss Morton an opportunity to express the complexity of emotions she showed us, but if I'd had any hunch you'd take it into your head to go at me like a ton of rock, I'd have picked another rôle. Next time, I'll choose a man with less athletic fingers."

Potter strove to rally his somnolent sense of humor. Dorothy's eyes, watching him, grew misty. He had been kind to her, and she had deceived him. Disgust at her own part in the sensational melodrama, ridiculous as it now appeared to her, drove her on in her clumsy attempt at explanation.

"I'm so very sorry I was so foolish," she said miserably. "I never stopped to think how this must appear to you when you discovered how we had deceived you and—and—used you. I only thought of the wonderful chance it gave me to show what I could do in the way of acting, as well as dancing. It seemed so easy, such ideal conditions for me, without any of those dangerous stunts they show in the pictures. I didn't consider any one save myself—that I must show Mr. Bainbridge I could make good under unusual circumstances. But now that it's all over, I realize how selfish, how thoughtless I've been. I wanted to make a hit, quick, and I was willing to dare everything, sacrifice everything, for that."

"You've succeeded. It's the hit of your career," conceded Jerry, glancing at the moving-picture man as he moved toward the hall.

"Oh, I say, Jerry," called Bainbridge as he halted an instant. "I'm afraid I'm short on gas. Can I get some from your garage? We must be running along. Lillian's in on this and probably thinks we're stalled with a blow-out."

"Help yourself," responded Potter, whose last vestige of acrimony had melted beneath Dorothy's plea. "Taro will put it in for you."

As Bainbridge disappeared, a curious sense of embarrassment possessed them. Potter took a few irresolute steps to follow him, but Dorothy's voice, with a husky little thrill in it, checked him. Just why she should value this man's good opinion so highly she did not pause to analyze. She felt only a supreme desire to apologize.

"You have every right to be desperately angry, for we must have—offended you. Will you, can you, forgive me for my silly part in this—this——"

She broke off incoherently. He turned and came back to her, so close that he looked directly down into her wide, appealing eyes.

"If I hadn't been selected as audience for this little scene, I would, in all probability, never have met you," he began deliberately, "for Bainbridge would have whisked you off to California. So I'm really in his debt. I won't attempt to conceal the fact that you interest me deeply. You're so refreshingly different from any girl I've ever known, in your combination of deliberate daring and——" He caught back the word "innocence" upon his tongue, substituting, "and—ah—confidence. But do you fully realize the kind of life you're choosing? Is it the glamour of being a moving-picture actress that's tempting you or—what?"

"Do you mean you consider a girl shouldn't enter that as a profession?"

From the clarity of her gaze, he read the innocence in her query. The unknown capacity for tenderness that she had before aroused in him returned in full force.

"I think it one of the most dangerous, because the most alluring, careers that a young girl can choose, unless she's already an established professional," he



Something in Potter's gaze compelled Dorothy to look at him. "I'm hoping she'll consider a totally different position," he said briefly. "A purely—domestic—career."

answered gently. "Certainly not at all the sort of thing such a girl as you should attempt. You haven't the faintest idea of what you'll be up against, I'm afraid. The glamour appeals to every woman, but the reality works out quite some different, they find." He smiled whimsically at his own slang. "You'll be obliged to mingle and work with all classes of people at the studios, from the lowest supers to the camera men. Even the directors themselves become so insolent that they order the members of their companies about as if they held mortgages on their souls as well as their bodies. And you practically belong to them. You'd soon lose your bloom, your refinement, among such riffraff. It's unthinkable you should go into it!"

He broke off abruptly, amazed at the strength of his own feeling toward a question to which he had hitherto given no thought.

"I wish you'd consider this more fully before you sign up with Bainbridge," he pursued. "Say a week, at least."

"Of course I don't want to go into anything rashly that I might regret," she answered, oddly happy at the return of his interest, "but Monsieur Duquesne thinks this such a wonderful opportunity for me and—what else can I do?"

"Have you no desire for any of the things other girls want?" he asked, his voice sinking.

"Why, yes, of course I like pretty clothes and nice things and—and all that," she said vaguely. "But I shall work and be able to buy them for myself, you see."

"I don't mean that. I'm speaking of the other things that count, the things you'll give up if you become a moving-picture actress, even if you are successful—a home of your own and all the comforts that go with it, the real things of life, marriage, children—"

He stopped, amazed at his subconscious emotions clarifying into words.

She looked down at her lovely bare feet.

"I haven't thought anything about such things," she confessed. "I've never had to consider them, for the future has seemed so vague, so far away from my everyday grind."

"But you must have known men—Forgive me. I don't want to annoy you with unwelcome compliments," he added hastily, "but such a girl as you— Oh, hang it! You *must* have had more or less attention!"

Her pulses gave an exultant little throb at the candid sincerity of his exclamation. A dimple deepened at the corner of her lips as she answered demurely:

"Before I came to New York, I was just a schoolgirl, you see, and all the

young men I knew either went into the army or away to the cities to work. And since I've been here, I've had to study so hard I've not had time to make friends. Men come to the *dansants*, but I've tried to be careful whom I meet. One has to be," she ended, but beneath the trite statement Potter read mental reservations covering many unpleasant experiences and again that delirious desire to fight—this time including the entire masculine population of Manhattan—obsessed him.

"See here!" he began impulsively. "I wish you'd let me look after you! I don't mean—I mean"—for the surprise in the big brown eyes disconcerted him—"I mean just as a friend—a sort of big brother. No, not a brother—"

And Jerry Potter, the smart man-about-town, felt himself stuttering like a country lout. What the devil was the matter, he asked himself savagely. Why should a pair of brown eyes, impudic with something that appealed to the best instincts within him, so utterly unnerve him? But apparently the girl was experiencing some kindred emotion, for her eyes filled suddenly.

"You are so kind!" she murmured. "I haven't a soul who is interested enough in me to care whether I go into the movies or what becomes of me. It's been so lonely, for I haven't dared to make friends with the people who come to the studio, and some of the men have been rather horrid."

"Leave them to me," Potter's tone was grimly assuring. "You'll let me be your friend?"

Her glance searched his face gravely; then she laid her hand into the one he offered.

"May I see you dance some time?" he asked abruptly.

"I should be so glad if you care to come to the studio," she answered warmly. "On Monday afternoon, they're to give a tea, and I'm to do solos. But perhaps, after all the things

Mr. Bainbridge told you about them——" She broke off, blushing.

Jerry hid his smile.

"You blessed infant!" he murmured beneath his breath.

"What did you say?" she asked.

"Only my way of saying I'll be delighted. I'll be there. And you'll think over this movie question? You'll not accept it until we talk it over a bit?"

"I'll not give Mr. Bainbridge an answer until I see you again. That'll be day after to-morrow—no, to-morrow afternoon."

She glanced at the tall, old-fashioned clock in the corner. The hands pointed to a quarter of three.

"It's fearfully late." She made an effort to withdraw her hand, but abandoned it as Potter made no move to relinquish it.

"Put him off, anyway, until Tuesday. If you'll dine with me after the tea to-morrow, we can talk it over then. I'll make it a point to see Bainbridge in the morning and find out something about the company you will join. But I'm hoping to win you over to my point of view. One or two things have occurred to me for which you seem preëminently suited——"

"Oh, what?" she interrupted in breathless interest.

Jerry hedged. He could not yet tell her of the new scheme of existence in which his vivid imagination was already picturing her.

"I'm afraid I don't know you quite well enough yet to feel you'd care for the suggestion, but I'm hoping, before

the week is up, I can persuade you to listen, at least."

Something in his voice sent a premonitory thrill of pleasure through Dorothy, but her reply was checked by Bainbridge's return.

"All right now, Miss Morton," he called from the hall doorway. "Sorry I was so long, but the car needed oil as well as gas. Be over to-morrow for dinner and golf, Jerry?"

"Why, yes, Jim's arranged a foursome," answered Potter, as he draped the gray satin wrap about Dorothy's shoulders. "I'll have a talk with him then," he murmured into the small ear buried in the bluish-gray chinchilla.

Beneath the porte-cochère the waiting machine hummed with the running engine. Bainbridge, leaving Jerry to tuck in Miss Morton, ran around to the other side and dexterously slid into the driver's seat.

"You've seen the making of a popular movie star to-night, Jerry!" he exclaimed jestingly. "Hope the pleasure of seeing her on our films will make you forget the bad taste of our little joke!"

As he straightened up from tucking the robe about her, something in Potter's gaze compelled Dorothy to look at him. His reply, so low that Bainbridge caught only an indistinct murmur, and delivered directly to Dorothy alone, brought her a sudden rush of amazing, yet rapturously illuminating comprehension.

"I'm hoping she'll consider a totally different position," he said briefly. "A purely—domestic—career."





INTIMACY and/ ALLURE

by
**VIRGINIA
MIDDLETON**
Author of

"How Often Can One Love?" "Shall She Marry Her Soldier?" etc.

**"Has any one ever computed how long a young husband
keeps an interest in the glimpses of his wife's lingerie?"**

WHEN Edwin, walking in the flowery paths of spring with Angelina, is requested to tie the escaping laces of her low shoe, and, having performed the kindly service, presses a daring kiss upon the silk-clad instep above the laces, what do they both think in regard to the caress? They have a sense of wonderful, passionate adventure, and probably imagine that nothing in life could be one-half so satisfying as the frequent or continuous opportunity for such an expression of ardor and adoration.

Or they have gone Maying, or Octobering, and Angelina, careless girl, discovers that she has left at home, or lost, or mislaid, the necessary handkerchief. Whereupon, the capaciously pocketed Edwin produces an extra one of his own, and she mops her forehead, or dries her hands with it, or sneezes into it, and Edwin has a moment of feeling that this square twenty inches of linen is set apart from every other such square in the world, that it ought never again to be subjected to the desecrating chances of the common family laundry,

or of his top bureau drawer, so unfortunately available to all his brothers—the emergencies of young brothers lack the charm of Angelina's!—in moments of emergency. It should be kept in some secret place, the touch of her fingers, the perfume of her skin, never to be boiled out of it, according to the common fate of handkerchiefs. And Angelina would quite agree with him as to the set-apartness of this piece of linen. Indeed, she would probably mentally supply him with all the necessary fancies if he himself were a plain young man who marked his belongings in indelible ink and had no particular gift for idealizing their uses even when connected with her and sweet dependence upon him.

Do you remember how David Copperfield, in the days before he married Dora, used to speculate, with delicious palpitations, about the possibility of her curl papers? It excited him, intrigued his imagination, filled him with visions of intimacy. It was a wonderful possibility. Did those dancing curls owe themselves to prosaic papers? He ex-

perienced no revulsion at the thought; he would not consider himself deceived by the discovery that the waves and tendrils were not all a gift of nature. He was fascinated only by the vision of the intimacy which actual knowledge of the fact of curl papers would involve. Nowadays, since curl papers are no longer displayed in the best circles, he would have had the same speculations, doubtless, about her boudoir caps. Did she wear them? Were they lined with pink or blue? Were they trimmed with ribbon or laces? Some time he would know!

There is very little in the post-matrimonial pages of "David Copperfield" about curl papers, and all that they connoted.

And Edwin, a year after marriage, will not kiss Angelina's silk-clad instep when he stoops to tie her recalcitrant shoe string. Instead, it is ten to one that he will peevishly inquire if she can't manage to fasten her shoes so that the laces will not be forever flapping. And as for his handkerchiefs, folded so neatly, so ample, so much more satisfactory for every practical purpose than Angelina's silly little films of embroidery, Heaven help her if she makes inroads upon them!

Why is this? Why does the actual intimacy which, unattainable, filled Edwin and Angelina with thoughts of such tenderness and delight, why does it become so tame and tedious a thing once it has been attained?

Has any one ever computed how long a young husband keeps an interest in the glimpses of his wife's lingerie ruffles? How long he esteems it a privilege to fasten her party gowns up the back? How long the sight of her burnishing her locks at night fills him with bliss comparable to that of the men who watch the Lorelei at her hair-dressing? How long is the sight of her pink silk *saut de lit*, hanging at the foot of the bed, a vision of lovely intimacies,

of familiarity which has no touch of staleness, but is still unbelievably joyful?

They would be depressing statistics, those compiled by any mathematician on this subject. For the period of Edwin's delight in all the outward and visible signs of the inward grace that was bestowed by the marriage ceremony is just about as long as Angelina's period of going to his clothes closet that she may bury her face in the tweed shoulder that still keeps, upon its hanger, the suggestion of his outline, and that will never, never lose the odor of his tobacco.

Separate them—send Angelina to the hospital or Edwin to the cantonment—and the pink silk or the gray wool regain their potency to cause emotion, to fill the heart to bursting, to set the throat to aching, to flood the eyes with tears. Let Angelina even go away upon a little visit, to her college-class reunion or to the wedding of her cousin in Kalamazoo or Bangor, and her little satin mules may—possibly—be the recipients of a furtive caress from the temporarily abandoned Edwin. Or let him go off on a business or a fishing trip, and Angelina may have a resurgence of tenderness toward the old dressing gown to which he is so mysteriously addicted, despite his annual new one, bestowed by an uninventive female relative each Christmas.

But, day in and day out, how little all the intimate garments and the intimate, undress glimpses of each other, which they once felt to be both the mainspring of their regard and its reward—how little they matter!

Her boudoir caps are no more exciting than her sailor hat or her tam, after a brief acquaintance with them. Her lacy ruffles are no more provocative of bliss than are the buttons on her cloth tailored skirt. The invitation to hook her up the back is no invitation to rites and privileges half sacred, half sensu-

ous, and altogether sweet. To see her powdering not only her nose, but her throat and her shoulders, is not in the least piquant after a little while.

It is not altogether that a mystery is removed, and that mystery is a strong element in fascination. It is partly that the practice of the restorative arts is unlovely, put it how one will. And the hair brushings, the cold creamings, the powderings, the pencilings—what are they all but restoration work? What are they but notices that the processes of disintegration are going forward, that the flesh is corruptible, and that, in so far as love is of the flesh, it is a thing of decay?

Edwin need not be morbid, need not be poetic, need not even be articulate in his thoughts, to find that Angelina, in the silken negligee and the satin mules, brushing her hair with silver brushes before a dressing table bright with the paraphernalia of beauty, is a very *memento mori*, a reminder of the corruptibility of the mortal part of her and him and all the world.

And yet Angelina, though a good and virtuous little maid, has been taught to believe that the privilege of intimate sight of her in intimate moments was one of the weapons of allurements which marriage bestowed upon her. She has even been taught, poor child, that it is a weapon of allurements by which she can meet the preying sisterhood upon their own ground, and worst them in the struggle for that invaluable prize, Edwin's affections! A stocking, a garter, a pink, bare foot, a piece of lace slipping from a fair, wifely shoulder—what should not these accomplish toward keeping eyes and thoughts and desires at home?

Sometimes the mentors have been wise enough to add that there must be no slipshodness about the intimate al-

lures. The pink silk must never grow dingy, the bronze stocking never show a rip in the heel, the lace boudoir cap never look less fresh than on the day when it emerged from its wrappings, or it becomes worse than useless, repulsive where it was created to attract.

But they have seldom told her that allurements is a quality intrinsic only in the unknown. The known may have many vastly more desirable qualities. One may love it and rest in it and yearn for it, but fascination dwells only in that which is not familiar. Make allurements commonplace, and they meet the fate of all commonplaces—they are ignored, overlooked, disdained. If Angelina is going to build for permanent married enchantment, she must build upon a vastly more substantial foundation than frills and embroidery, baby ribbons and silk hosiery.

It is no disparagement of Edwin to say that these things and the mere physical familiarities which they connote cannot attract him permanently. It is not to call him idle-minded, inconstant, forever seeking new stimulations. It is merely to suggest that Edwin is, after all, an immortal being and that—what was it Carlyle once said about the greatness of man and the satisfaction of ephemeral desires? Something to the effect that not all the upholsterers and confectioners in modern Europe could make one shoeblack happy above an hour or two, "for the Shoeblack also has a Soul quite other than his Stomach."

Yet one can picture the shoeblack standing at the confectioner's window, can picture his eyes glistening and his mouth watering as he gazes, can almost feel the unutterable rapture with which he hears the invitation to enter and explore, to make himself at home, master of the chocolates and the ices!



FLIRTATIOUS MR. HASKINS

by LUCILLE VAN SLYKE

Author of "The Bloom on Seven
Peaches," "Window Wishing," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

A gay little summer story by a clever writer.



JED'S brother shook his head when he heard we were going to live at Rosemont.

"Suburbs are no places to take blushing brides," he sighed. "Believe me, I have learned to take my suburbs seriously. They're rough spots. Always a gay Lothario in every one of 'em. I know, because I've been week-ended all over Westchester County and Long Island, and the things I've heard about men you'd never suspect to look at 'em! Well, my de-ah! Once a gay devil, always a gay devil! Even commuting can't cure 'em! Many a wife has hoped to tame her wandering boy thusly, but, my de-ah—really, no one knows what goes on in the most innocent-looking places."

Larry is simply incorrigible, and no one really pays any attention to him. But once he starts one of his inane jokes, he never lets it stop. All the picture postcards and telephone messages we had from him that summer asked us how the naughty, naughty suburbs were doing, and whether Jed was guarding me closely.

Jed and I were married in June. To be perfectly honest, it wasn't at all an

exciting romance. We were brought up together and went to school together and were just naturally good pals. I'm too matter-of-fact a person for any man to have an exciting romance with. I don't mean that Jed and I weren't happy. We were ever so. We would have been perfect chumps not to have been. We have a darling, wee house, and everybody that's anybody in this apple-pie suburb came to call, and we were asked to join the country club right spang off, and Jed's father, the old dear, gave us his last year's car when they bought this year's; so, you see, we just settled down to perfect bliss. Why, we even had an angel cook, a cook who liked company! And as we'd invited each bridesmaid to spend two weeks with us, that was just plain fairy-taleish. But somehow, I don't know why, along about August I began to get bored. Not ennuied. Just plain, old-fashioned bored. And fretty. Everything and everybody annoyed me horribly.

But most especially the folks that annoyed me were my next-door neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Haskins. Regular crabs, both of them, sidling along



I had them all in gales of laughter before I was through.

toward the past all the time, "things-aren't-like-they-used-to-be" sort of persons. He was a linen expert, and she was a committee fan. They had so much experience in their respective lines that you'd think nobody else knew anything. Combined ages ninety-eight, and their tidy house, tidy lawn, tidy servants, tidy garden, and tidy cocker spaniel would have averaged ninety-eight anywhere. They were so near par that they almost maddened me.

They didn't approve of me at all. Mrs. Haskins told me that almost as soon as she met me—not at all tactfully, either.

"My dear child, you ought to be wearing pink frills and weeping over burned biscuits and having sweet little spats and the dear, dear reconciliations. You ought"—very archly, digging me with her fan—"to be making baby clothes."

Now I simply couldn't imagine

squabbling with Jed. And as for trailing around in pink—well, I'm tanned and freckled usually from too much golf; and if I need any baby clothes, I know a perfectly ducky little shop where I can buy 'em.

I shoved these facts across to her, but she just began all over again impressing upon me that my life was not orthodox or normal. Hers was, surely; so normal that it made me want to wear red chiffon and smoke every time I glimpsed a cross section of it.

Nan Slocum came for the last two weeks of August. I'd sort of counted on Nan's bucking me up, but she was training for a tennis tournament and hardly noticed me, except to tell me what she must have to eat. I tried to explain to her how I felt about life, and she just yawned and said:

"You're a bit flabby, dear."

Flabby! I never looked so well in my life! And Nan knew it.

I tried to tell her how the Haskins bothered me.

She yawned some more and said she hadn't noticed them. Did they live near?

Not that Nan was hard to entertain. It was a cinch compared to what I'd had to do for some of my girlhood companions. She ate, slept, and breathed nothing but tennis—yanked Jed out of bed in the early morning hours and met him at trains and kept him playing till dark. Not that I cared. It was rather nice because it took Jed off my hands a bit, and he'd been getting on my nerves, too. Besides, I hate and loathe tennis. I have the worst serve in Westchester County, and I'm proud of it. And Jed hasn't had any real tennis since we came to Rosemont. Of course the Truslow boys do play, fairly well, well enough so that Nan can endure them, but not well enough so that they've ever had any patience with me.

Truly, I didn't care at all. It gave me time to jell and pickle, and every afternoon I did surgical dressings at the Red Cross. It seemed a splendid arrangement to me, because I'd had a guilty conscience all summer about regular honeymooning.

But, do you know, Mrs. Haskins wasn't at all pleased? She stopped one day and told me she thought it would be an awfully good scheme if I Red-Crossed mornings and brought my guest along. Said it would leave my afternoons free for youthful pursuits. I pretended not to understand. Then she hemmed and hawed and laid her hand on mine and put on a "take-the-advice-of-an-older-woman-my-dear" record. She told me how she and her beloved—umum, she called that fat, bald-headed, sandy-hairy-handed commuter her beloved!—had been in perfect accord for twenty-seven years. She modestly disclaimed any personal credit—said it was his sweet disposition and some advice that her mother had

given her that had built this heaven for her. Her mother, who knew men like a book, had had an infallible rule for successful matrimony. It was: "*Never let your husband have an interest you haven't in common with him.*" It seems it wasn't on account of the dear Red Cross that she wanted me to bring my guest mornings, but because she thought it didn't look well for Jed and Nan to be tennising while I was toiling. She said that *everybody* was noticing it.

It was Friday afternoon that she mentioned these little trifles, the same Friday afternoon that Jed had phoned me Larry would be out on the eight-twenty; the same Friday that the angel cook gave notice; the same Friday that the carburetor died; the same Friday that Jed told me Nan was the kind of girl who looked well in anything.

We had dinner on the side porch, rather late. They didn't get back from tennis till dark. That was why the cook was going. She didn't like late dinners. We'd just begun on a limp salad when Larry bobbed around the honeysuckle vines. He was awfully warm and flippant. Had come a train ahead of time and had had to walk from the station. He kissed Nan—by mistake, he said, thinking she was me—and began pretending he was a rabbit, wriggling his ears while he ate lettuce like a fourteen-year-old.

"Not that I minded the walk, old top," he assured Jed. I might have known, because he hadn't noticed me, that I was to be that trip's victim. "Had a boon companion all the way up. Fascinating chap. Charmed me with the latest scandals in linen. But it's just as I suspected, Jed. Even worse than I suspected. Little didst I think, when I began idly chatting with him, whom he wast." He shook his finger at me. "Naughty, naughty! And such old stuff! *You remind him strangely of some one he once knew!*"

The worst had happened. Larry had attached his Lothario joke to Mr. Haskins—fat, stupid, impossible Mr. Haskins!

"Central has given you the wrong number."

I tried to speak lightly. I could see the Truslow boys coming across the lawn, and I wanted to flag him before they heard it. But I was too late. He went right on with his silly drivel—asked the Truslows at once if flirtatious Mr. Haskins had ever broken up their happy home.

They fell for it, of course. Tom said solemnly that he'd always thought old Haskins no better than he ought to be, and Junior said he'd noticed I'd been languishing a bit lately.

Just to get them off their idiocy, I gave the conversation what I thought was going to be a quick, deft turn. I switched to the missis. Now, I'm a fairly good mimic, and she's a very mimickable subject. I had them all in gales of laughter before I was through. I pulled that "never-let-him-have-an-interest-you-haven't-in-common" stuff until they were holding their sides and begging me to stop.

When we were almost through laughing at me, Jed started us all over again by remarking that he guessed Mrs. Haskins was perfectly safe; he didn't believe that any woman on earth could get up the slightest interest in Mr. Haskins.

"Nor Mr. Haskins in any woman," sniffed Nan. She was awfully bored with the whole conversation after they all began laughing at me. Nan can't even imitate herself.

"Oh, I don't know," drawled Junior Truslow. "One morning going down in the train I caught a glimpse of a photograph glued in his stem-winder."

"Sly old dog!" declared Larry solemnly. "I spotted him in a minute. Something amorous looking about him!" He shook his head sadly. "Tell

us more, muh new-found friend. Yuh intrust muh strangely. What wast the charmer like?"

"Sort of a Mary Pickford à la *Spanische*—languishing eyes, dripping curls, floppy hat——"

"Romance can never die," yawned Nan. "He looks to me like the man who never saw a woman. No metal can touch him."

"Right-o, Nannie," said Junior Truslow. "No woman on earth could tear him from his lawful spouse."

"Except Madge," chirped Larry.

Jed simply whooped. He reached over and slapped me across the shoulders.

"Madge flirt?" he chortled. "She couldn't do it to save her life! It's not"—he stopped to mock me further by throwing in a word I'd been so careless as to spring earlier in the evening—"it's not her—ahem—*métier*, is it, old dear?"

"I should say, speaking classically, nit," groaned Nan.

"Desist, Mrs. Madge. You'll waste your sweetness on the desert air if you try trifling with his affections." Tom Truslow had a "you're-a-nice-girl-but——" expression. "We admit that he's flirtatious, but you're not just his style."

"Is that so?" I retorted. "Well, I'll bet you anything you like, and donate the winnings to any charity you suggest, that—that"—I began to slow down a bit when it came to particulars—"that I—I could——"

"Could what?" asked Nan, maliciously sweet.

"Have him—er—tagging around after we——"

"Oh, come now!" protested Junior. "Give us a run for our money. Make the thing interesting, alluring, fascinating, devilish! What will you do with the flirtatious little cuss? Have him at your feet? Holding your hands? Buying you jewelry?"

They did heck me so!

"Just how good are you?" chimed in Tom. "I'll bet you mother's new cook you can't."

"I'll bet you Jed's gold cigarette case I can!" I answered hotly.

"You certainly do hate yourself!" Junior taunted me. "You're losing your head, fair bride. I've lived next door to old Haskins for five years and 'steen months, and I'll bet real, regular money—ten good round dollars of it—that it can't be did."

After that, things got very exciting. Larry jumped up on a chair and made a book on it, and everybody bet. And then Larry pulled out a time-table and pretended that it was a book called "A Thousand Ways To Charm a Man," and said he knew the address of a good "Spoonng Taught By Mail" company, and warned me over and over that I was up against a very gay old devil and that I must watch out or I would be the victimess instead of the captor. He insisted on betting on me.

"Those ducks haven't a chance," he sighed. "The old boy is as good as lashed to the mast now. I know from what he told me. You look so much like—*some one he used to know.*"

Jed let them rave on until the Trulows were leaving.

"It's been good sport," he said, casually tucking his arm through mine, "but



He leaned over the fence to write the prescription for me.

all bets are off now, and the dinner in town is on us. I couldn't let old Madge play that sort of trick even to make a dago holiday."

"Jeddie says, 'No, no!'" teased Nan. "'Mustn't touch it!'"

That settled things finally for me.

"Mustn't!" My voice trembled in spite of my firmest resolves. "Why, I'd just like to see any of you stop me!"

"Madge"—Jed's eyes were just flashing—"you're carrying this darned joke too far!"

"It's no joke," I said airily. "I've known for a long time just what Hasky was like. Haven't you noticed how I've had to avoid him? Dear me"—I pre-

tended to yawn—"did you just realize how he feels about your unattractive little slave?"

I didn't sleep for hours. I just lay awake and planned my campaign. Mrs. Haskins herself had given me my cue. Her "beloved" is a garden fan. Gets up in the dewy morn to watch the radish blush. Grows fourteen distinct varieties of pole beans. And nobody ever saw Mrs. Haskins step beyond the line of her immaculate side porch.

I couldn't begin Saturday morning. I wasn't quite ready. Larry was at the game early, whispering shrilly that my one best bet was to be hanging over the hedge to wave a fond farewell when old Haskins should pass.

I didn't answer him—just said I had to go to town on business on the ten-four, and did Nan want to go? She wouldn't have dared go. Besides, she and Larry and the Truslows were ready for tennis. Jed suggested haughtily that I go in on the eight-fifty-seven with him, but I refused.

Of course it was Junior Truslow's "Mary Pickford à la *Spanische*" that gave me the rest of my plan. It took me less than an hour to do the necessary shopping. I bought one eyebrow pencil, one lip stick, one broad-brimmed, flower-trimmed, lacy, utterly impractical garden hat and eight languishing curls to sew into the same, one pale pink gingham dress with a choir-boy collar, one white ruffy dotted swiss with a blue sash, and a pair of low-heeled black slippers with cross straps.

You see, don't you, how easy everything was going to be?

I set the alarm clock for six-thirty Sunday morning. Mr. Haskins found me—or, rather, *her*, for the girl I built with the curls and the pink frock and the garden hat wasn't me at all!—leaning over the fence looking longingly at his Danvers Early Onions, sighing, pouting, poking a contemptuous toe at our nine onions.

Our vegetable patch is a travesty. Our intentions toward it were perfectly honorable, but golf does interfere with endive. Mr. Haskins' garden looks like "Happy Days in Holland."

I must confess that Mr. Haskins' suspenders almost made me take my hand from the plow. Only Larry's brisk whistling from his bathroom window—"Trust Her Not, She's Fooling Thee!"—kept me on my job. That and the knowledge that Jed and Nan and the Truslows all had a full view of Act I, Scene I. It went off pretty well.

Mr. Haskins was enraptured. He loved his garden as if it were a blonde. He liked to tell me all her idiosyncrasies; he patted her gently while he talked. He doubted whether anything could really rouse my little sleeping beauty, but he thought Bordeaux mixture, applied every morning, might tone up her general condition. He leaned over the fence to write the prescription for me. He patted my shoulder encouragingly as I tripped away.

"Seven sharp to-morrow," he babbled as I fled. "Be a little early birdie!"

Breakfast was rather awful. Larry wore the hat with the curls, and Nan pretended that she wanted to help me all she could and suggested that we all practice lisping.

"You'd be an irrrrithtable little birdie if you could lithp."

Jed didn't say a word. He just kept looking at my cross-strapped slippers. After the Haskins started for church, I went out in my old bathing suit and began cleaning the car. Jed came leaping around the pergola, grabbed the hose viciously, and then—well, then what we said to each other would have completely satisfied Mrs. Haskins. Only it wasn't any "sweet little spat"; it was—it was just stone-age stuff. And we didn't indulge in any dear, sweet reconciliation, either. Among other things, Jed positively forbade me to speak to Mr. Haskins again.

So I walked straight into the house and put on the white dress—and the hat—and cut some roses from the Truslows' arbor and strolled out to the gate just in time to meet the Haskins, accidentally, as they were returning from church.

Mrs. Haskins gave me one look and shut her lips together tight and walked on without a word. At least five porchfuls of people saw her. And Mr. Haskins stopped, put his hand on my arm, and looked at me and sighed. Larry and Nan were coming back from tennis.

"Rough work!" he called. "Very rough work!"

"Nan looks it," I cooed sweetly.

I'm not going to regale you with all the revolting details of my affair with Mr. Haskins. But by Thursday, as Larry expressed it, I was going very good—much too good.

Everybody in Rosemont knew that Mr. Haskins was teaching me to garden. Everybody in Rosemont knew that Jed had stayed in town two nights. Everybody in our block saw Mr. Haskins bringing home to me, on the hottest night of August, a rake and a hoe and a patent weeder.

He had the moistest way of ogling me. Would begin by smiling at me and then get tearful and blow his nose. Larry used to get out his handkerchief every time he saw him coming. As for Mrs. Haskins, I scarcely saw her during that awful week, but she must have known that everybody was talking. Why, even my cook knew! She came to me Thursday afternoon, dressed for the day out—green silk, leghorn hat with a red rose, and white kid boots. She weighs two hundred.

"I'm not leaving, Mis' Thurston," she said ponderously. "I don't believe a word I'm hearing. I kinda think he means well." And she walked away so fast that I couldn't have said a word even if I'd known a word to say. She put her head through the door. "I left

biscuits mixed ready to slip in the oven, and I set the supper table on the side porch," she added. "I knew that Nan woman wouldn't help you none, and I hate for you to get tired."

The rest were at the tennis court. I guess it was almost six before I remembered the biscuits. It was awfully hot—just still, breathless hot—and I somehow, without thinking about it, slipped into the frilly dotted muslin, and a foolish little apron that a maiden aunt sent for my trousseau.

I was washing salad on the kitchen porch when Mr. Haskins came scrunching around the gravel path. I could see the others coming across the lawn, very quietly in their rubber sneakers. Jed had his head down and wasn't saying anything, just slashing at the hedge with his racket. Nan was walking ahead of him, her chin up in the air, and behind them came Larry and the Truslows, fanning themselves with their caps.

Mr. Haskins didn't seem to see them at all. He stood on the lower step with his back to them. He looked so queer. He'd bought himself a pongee suit, and I noticed he wore a new Panama hat. He took it off, mopped his perspiry brow, fumbled in his pocket a minute, and suddenly, without a bit of warning, stepped up to me and put his arm around my waist.

He has a sort of rumbling, boomy voice. His words blunder out like bumblebees.

I wanted to scream, and I couldn't. The whole thing was like a bad dream. Jed's head was still down. I knew that I would scream the minute he lifted it. Nan was the nearest. She stopped, absolutely petrified, and put out a hand toward Larry to steady herself.

"My dear," Mr. Haskins' voice blundered out, "I've—I've brought you a little present. It's—it's—some pearls. Wait—don't say anything—yet. I—this—is the happiest and the unhappiest



"My dear," Mr. Haskins' voice blundered out, "I've—I've brought you a little present. It's—
it's—some pearls."

day of my life, I think. I—we—I had dreaded it, but you have made it sort of sweet." He brought his arm from around my waist, and his hairy hands poked open the jeweler's case he had thrust into my fingers. "These aren't very big pearls, and they're—sort of—

We always dread her birthdays. We—we kinda planned to ask you to come to dinner and to—give you her present—to do it that way. But Eunice got one of her nervous headaches. She thought"—he was backing off the steps now—"you'd understand. You *do* look



old-fashioned. They were my mother's. She left 'em for—well, there wasn't anybody really for her to leave 'em for.

We didn't see, when you first came here to live, how much you looked like—like the girl we built that house for." His shoulders jerked themselves toward his home. "We—built it for her, but she didn't see it—she died two weeks before it was finished. She'd have been twenty-one years old to-day. Twenty-one. We sort of dreaded it,

like our little girl—" His voice trailed miserably. "Not before, you didn't, but lately—in those kind of clothes you've been wearing—and that hat— God bless you for looking like her!"

I don't know what became of the Truslows, I don't know what became of Larry. I remember hearing Nan's quick rush up the back stairs. Her bedroom door slammed, but not quick enough to shut in a little throaty sob.

I pushed Jed away from me.

"Don't—don't! I'm not fit to touch!"

Jed is an angel. He said the only thing in the world that could have comforted me.

"It wasn't your fault, old dear. We all just pushed you into it. Madge, Madge, think how happy you made the old grouch! Why, Madge, he couldn't help loving you!"

I guess even Mrs. Haskins would have been satisfied with what I said next. I was positively mid-Victorian. I put my arms around Jed's neck and stood tiptoe to whisper to him.

"Jed—I didn't mean to! I just hated—hated everything and everybody! I didn't want her, but I do now! Oh, I do! I'm idiotically happy about her. You're going to love her. But, oh, Jed—if there's anything in this prenatal business, you'll have an awfully flirtatious, coquettish daughter!"

Larry banged the kitchen screen.

"The house is burning!" he cried.
"The house is burning!"

But it wasn't. It was just the biscuits.



A MAGDALEN OF CHARING CROSS

THE thunderous trains roll on and on,
And men are come and men are gone.
For France, from France,
To and fro

*The ponderous trainloads come and go
With outbound hope and homebound woe.*

The ambulances wait a-row,
And as they wait, bystanders throw
To wan, still sufferers within
Warm flowers of red, pale flowers of snow.
Slow, smile-lit tears the blossoms win
From eyes that longed for many a day
To see once more Old England's May.

A wanderer of the streets was there,
With soiled, frayed finery, unkempt hair,
Health's mockery of rouge-tinged cheek—
Young, with a child's half-wistful air.
She shook her purse a coin to seek
That she might, too, her tribute make
To those who fought for England's sake.

A penny—that was all; and so
One rose was all that she could throw,
But with it fell a rain of tears
That washed her stained cheeks white as snow!
O little sister, shall the years
Not teach some pity, too, for you
Whom life has wounded through and through?

ANNE VIRGINIA CULBERTSON.

The ANSWER in the BACK of the BOOK



by ANNE SHANNON MONROE
Author of "Happy Valley," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

The absorbing romance of an ambitious young man who set out to "marry money," and to whom love and the war brought a wonderful regeneration.

THEY were chums on adjoining farms as far back as the time when enthusiastic elderly females were wont to exclaim, "What a pretty little boy Wesley is!" and, "Well, Joey's smart, anyway"—the patrician-featured, dreamy-eyed, curly-lashed, quiet little youngster, and the stubby, bow-legged, scanty-haired, near-sighted, irrepressibly noisy one.

As young men at the South Corners High School, their friendship continued, Joey invariably "getting the answer," Wesley taking prizes in deportment, penmanship, and drawing. Even the rivalry caused by girls did not make a break in their affection, and this was a real test, for the girls unfailingly preferred Wesley. Early, Joey settled like a tick to his devotion to Wesley's pretty sister, Martha.

It was decreed by the parents of the two that the boys should go to Chicago and make their fortunes. Farming, with the uncertainty of crops and the full certainty of middlemen to sop up

the biggest part of the profits, had become discouraging. Since the boys had been old enough for such responsibility, it had been their job to get up at two a. m. and drive the milk to the station for shipment into Chicago. Early, it occurred to Joey that they were operating at the wrong end. He would figure it out to Wesley as they drove home in the early morning.

"What I say, Wes," Joey would jerk out, with energetic noddings and shakings of his funny, square little head, "is let's be the man that receives the milk at the station and sells it straight away for seven cents. What's the use being the one that feeds and milks and carts it in and then gets just three?"

Once, when Joey was quite small, he had been taken for a visit to Chicago and had ridden on the elevated. Ever afterward, when asked what he was going to be when he grew up, he would answer promptly, "The man that takes up the nickels in Chicago." When you asked Wesley what he was going

to be, he would look back with wondering, puzzled eyes; he never quite knew. But even as a little shaver, he loved best of all to make pictures.

When the boys started for Chicago on a happy spring morning, both were confident of one thing, however much in the dark the details might be, and that was that they would soon have the city eating out of their hands.

After three days of job hunting, with the assistance of the help-wanted columns of the daily press, Wesley finally got a chance to work in a haberdashery, at five dollars a week. Joey landed an equally fat job in a gray commission house in South Water Street, where he was to receive and sort vegetables—also, assist the bookkeeper.

At first they occupied jointly a hall bedroom on the West Side, within walking distance of their work. But almost immediately Joey eliminated this expense. He got permission from his boss to fit up a small unused storeroom back of the commission house, and here they slept and cooked their meals. Joey hadn't a moment to lose getting ahead, for he and Martha had very definite plans. Wesley, too, had definite plans to help his father, who was troubled with rheumatism and worked out.

They were biffed, banged, and badgered about, and in a surprisingly short time appeared two conventional young men, in nowise different from the thousands of others who make the little cogs of big Chicago business. With the passing months, came small raises, and there were now checks and parcels for the home folks.

They kept in physical condition with tennis, golf, and skating in the Chicago parks, while on pleasant Sunday afternoons they would go for long walks and later sit on a Jackson Park bench overlooking the lake and watch the well-dressed people from the fashionable lake-shore hotels parade by. Each would think his own thoughts.

Joey's would run about like this:

"There are two bunches of people. One's a nubbin of a bunch, but it's got everything; the other's the big spill, but it ain't got a damn' thing. How does a fellow get outa the big bunch into the little un?"

Wesley's: "It's a wonder—that blue mist on the lake, with pink shining through! I'd like to try if I could sketch it—if only every one wouldn't stare so. And the white ruffly edge looks frivolous for such majestic water. Still—it belongs. If only I could paint it!"

The first year went by; another followed it; another and still another.

Wesley was earning twenty-five dollars a week. He was a full-fledged salesman now. He had never laid by enough to risk trying for a better job, and as jobs went, he was satisfied. The haberdashery was a pleasant enough place to work, the boss was agreeable, and while Wesley was no nearer having the town eat out of his hand than he had been four years earlier, still, he could dress fairly decently, he had a comfortable West Side room, he went to a good show now and then, he ate an occasional dinner in a decent grill, and he sent money home every week.

The Art Institute was his main source of joy. He visited the studios, knew the artists, and watched them paint and model to his heart's content. They were always saying, "When are you going to start, Bain?" and he always cheerfully assured them, "Soon, now." Sometimes he picked up extra money by painting window signs, but this all went to his father.

Joey had stuck like a bur in a bramble to his grouchy old boss and his unpleasant surroundings, for he had seen his ultimate opportunity in the commission business. His boss' health was failing, and he had but one son whom the boy's mother had educated to be a gentleman, according to her light, which

meant that he would never be in Joey's way in the business, if Joey could only get an interest in the firm. There never had been such an opportunity to make money in food, what with the great European war raging. Joey had a scheme to corner certain foods and make a big thing. A man he knew had cleaned up ten thousand on a sudden turn. Joey's dreams would spin on and on, all of silver threads leading into discs of silver dollars.

By their fifth year, Joey had acquired a habit, when not actually at work, of complete absent-mindedness.

"Come out of it," Wesley would say.

Joey would "come out" into vocalization:

"If I had five thousand dollars cash, I could get an interest. Old man gets feebler—and stupider. If I had control right now, I'd buy up cabbages. That's the stuff—corner cabbages. Gotta have sauerkraut. Look at the Germans. America's full of 'em. Gotta have sauerkraut. Could clear twenty thousand dollars in one season. Then I'd plunge—wheat. Know a fellow that made it in wheat on three thousand dollars. Wheat's going up, steady."

Wesley would listen respectfully without really following. An uneasiness permeated him, a subconscious realization of the farm—of Martha milking. Martha hadn't looked well when he had last seen her. There had been dark rings under her eyes. She lost too much sleep with the early milking. It was up to him to do something. But what? He turned back to Joey; Joey would "get the answer," once he ran down on wheat tips, war babies, corners.

But Joey never seemed to find a usable answer. His ambitions were too big. They didn't hinge on to any of the facts of his situation. There was an impossible gap.

Then came the great inspiration. It had turned off warm for March, and

after a brisk walk, they had found an unoccupied park bench. Joey had fallen into silence. Wesley looked idly across the water. There paraded by young women in their warm colors, lured out by the first bright weather; beautiful little children, crisply white, with patient nurses; and groups of elderly people, well groomed, exuding prosperity.

Wesley had become obsessed with the beauty of the scene. He was drifting in its sharp, fine contrasts—blue water, clear sky, lovely young women like flowers—when Joey suddenly awakened from his abstraction, his attention being caught by two stunning young women who were just passing, their faces partly shielded by wide, drooping hats. They were not different from scores of others who had passed that Sunday afternoon, but what struck Joey all of a heap was the way they looked at Wesley. He had always bantered Wesley on the way the girls "fell for him," but girls like these—rich girls—who had their pick! The prettiest of the two glanced back, and as Joey caught her glance, she turned her head quickly so that the wide hat came between. He looked amusedly at Wesley, who was dreamily unconscious of anything personal.

All at once Joey saw Wesley as if for the first time. He straightened up, drew back, and took him in from head to toe. Why, Wesley was handsome—and he looked every inch the man of the world, the young club man, the society man. He was languid, a bit lazy in his movements; he had not acquired the Chicago hustling gait. He was faultlessly dressed, too. With keen appraisal, Joey ran over his slender hands, his perfect nails, his unobtrusive attitude. Wesley was a gentleman, every inch of him, and a mighty fine-looking one, too.

Other men passed, dullish men with bowed backs and vacant eyes. Wesley



She regarded him curiously, but she did not dismiss him. "You're a peculiar young man," she said.

looked a darn' sight better than the whole pack. And that pack was where these rich girls must get their husbands. Wouldn't they jump at a real man like Wes?

"Wes," he exclaimed, "I've got the answer! We'll float you in society—marry you to an heiress—and you'll set old Joey up in business! Nature's gifted you with the hooks to pull in the dough, and I'll put in the little old yeastcake! It's all up to you!"

"What in the Sam Hill——"

"Wait. Here's the plan. You're all right, Wes, but you're cast for the wrong part. We'll cast you right and

put you over. We'll give up our rooms, and I'll move back to the commission house and cook my own grub. That'll leave almost all my salary, and I've got a few hundred laid away. You get togged out in everything a gentleman carries, from his skin to his cigar ash, and move to the Lakeside Hotel. You're to be the favored son, my boy, put out in society. You circulate—mix—and marry an heiress, see? All you've got to do is to fall in love with her. I'll guarantee the rest. Haven't I see 'em at South Corners? Girls are the same the world over. Well, you marry an heiress, and you set old Joey up in the commission business."

Wesley thought it one of Joey's jokes, but he had the seriousness of the plan drummed into his head.

"Joey—to marry a girl for her money!"

"Well, you're not marrying one for her lack of money so all-fired fast. It's no crime. You'll likely love her. It oughtn't to be hard. Look at 'em."

The evening following his first dinner at the Lakeside, Wesley sat quietly smoking on the large veranda in a languid attitude, exactly as he had sat Sunday after Sunday on a park bench with Joey—only it was wonderful what a difference it made, being properly

enviored. He really enjoyed his new home so thoroughly that he was in danger of overlooking the object. Wesley certainly lacked initiative; Joey would have butted into the game at once.

The second evening he was thus occupied—losing time, as the aggressive Joey would have said—he singled out from the girls who played tennis after dinner one who did not play. She was beautiful—of a slender, willowy goldenness, all delicacy of tint and texture, all fineness, sensitiveness. There was a vaguely troubled expression in her large gray eyes, and purple shadows beneath them. She looked troubled—not sharply, but oppressively troubled. She was twenty-five or twenty-six—maybe older—while the others of her party were buoyantly youthful.

She went at once from the dining room to one of the arched nooks that characterized this great summer hotel, and opened a magazine. But she did not open it or read it with interest. Later, she did not dance. Her young friends ran out to her from time to time, between dances, and an older, more matronly woman came at last and remained with her. Early—it couldn't have been ten—she rose and went upstairs.

Her face haunted Wesley. It wasn't merely its loveliness—it was the disturbing cloud that seemed to hover over it. He tried to remember what she had worn, but could not recall it, only that it suited her—something filmy that wrapped her about like a rosy-gray mist. Her hair, he remembered, was an ashy gold, and very fine and soft, like a baby's. It flattened about her head, leaving clear the fine lines of a perfect contour. The bones showed slightly in her neck. Wesley liked that; the buxom stoutness of her young friends had not interested him. He wanted to paint her. He went to sleep undecided about a background.

At dinner the following evening, he watched eagerly for the golden girl. She came at last when he was half through. She was in gray and green to-night, like a green sea with a gray cloud passing over. The older woman was with her. She knit steadily at a hideous gray sock between courses. Wesley wanted to take the sock out of the picture; it annoyed him.

The robust young girls of the evening before were also of the party, and a heavy-jawed, phlegmatic boy of about the same age. Undoubtedly the two women were sisters, and the younger ones were in some way related. Wesley decided that the boy was the older woman's son. The two girls had nothing whatever of the family appearance.

As Wesley watched, after their dinner was ordered, he caught the expression that had puzzled him in the young woman in the older woman's face—a certain hauntedness, as of something impending, something that had been impending for many years.

Wesley was rewarded for his scrutiny. Without moving her head, the golden girl raised her eyes full to his. She left them there for the briefest instant—while he caught it that there was green in them—then lifted her head with a conscious aloofness that removed her continents away.

That evening again, she did not dance, or the following evening.

Wesley saw Joey at midnight, in the old storeroom at the commission house. Wesley was subdued.

"Joey, there's a girl at the Lakeside who's in some sort of trouble. I don't know what. She looks fragile, but not an invalid—not by any means. She's got the most wonderful eyes! But you can't say just what it is about her. It's—I tell you, she's in some sort of trouble—something's about to break."

"Well, has she got money? That's the question I want a report on, old man. Has she got the dough?"

"I don't know, Joey. I don't know her name."

Joey stared through his ugly horn-rimmed glasses.

"Well, for the love of Mike! Don't know her name—a sick one—and her old man is in for a crash! You do pick winners!" he snorted.

Wesley stiffened.

"This has nothing to do with our business, Joey," he said with deep dignity. "This is something personal. Please don't mix us—you and me—with her. Besides, I've only seen her. But, Joey, did you ever see one of those slender, golden girls—that ought to be painted among reeds— That's it! By a lake—among reeds—in October! Did you ever see one, Joey—with purple shadows—the bones just barely showing in her neck, and——"

His friend sprang up and viciously pressed the electric button!

"Good night!" he exclaimed disgustingly.

A tennis ball landed on the veranda. The golden girl rose to return it; Wesley sprang for it; a near collision—apologies—smiles—and Wesley tossed the ball to the players. The golden girl did not at once retreat into her arbor of aloofness. Wesley, in the position in which the ball had left his hand—a slender, white-flanneled young athlete—remained poised an instant, then turned to her. She was regarding him with idly curious amusement.

"You don't play tennis—you don't dance. You should knit."

Strangely, Wesley was not offended by the mildly scornful tone. He was too grateful that she had let him hear her voice. It was exactly the voice for her—low, but full of delicacy, a singing voice.

"And you?" he parried.

She colored. The delicate pink served to deepen the purple shadows. Wesley remained standing, looking

down at her in his well-bred way, waiting to be dismissed, still wanting to stay near, but by no means intending to do so after a warning note should strike in her eyes.

It did not strike.

"Sit down," she said, sinking back among her cushions in the arbor, "and tell me why you don't do either." She evidently intended to ignore her knitting snub. "And if your reason is worth while, I may tell you why I don't."

He sat down in the tiny arbor opposite her and leaned on his cane.

"I prefer to watch you," was what Wesley said, and he said it with such honesty that even the most bored, most suspicious, most unapproachable of heiresses did not draw back into her armor. Wesley's dreamy eyes, with their long, curling lashes, gave him the look of innocence belonging to a very pretty, very dear small child.

She laughed. It was the first natural, spontaneous laugh he had heard from her, amidst the constant giggling of the younger girls. It was a delicious ripple of sound.

Wesley did not move. He wanted her to get him right.

"I'm among rather ugly things all day. I see many ugly people—men with bowed backs and hollow chests and crooked legs and shiny faces, oily and shiny—and pimply and putty colored—and women all hunched up in places, red and heavy. That's it—heavy—heavy ankles, heavy arms, heavy minds. Heavy—I think that's it. I see so much heaviness all day, going up and down the street. I look at you exactly as I would look at a picture—if a picture could be so exquisite. I hope you don't mind. It hadn't occurred to me that I should ever talk with you."

She regarded him curiously, but she did not dismiss him.

"You're a peculiar young man," she said.

"Am I entitled to know why you don't dance and play tennis?"

She drew back ever so slightly into her aloofness.

"I don't think it would interest you. It's exceedingly prosaic. I began going through those physical gyrations at the age of ten, and I'm now twenty-eight. Eighteen years is a long time for one set of physical gyrations. Frankly, I'm bored."

He stared at her blankly. Time meant so much to Wesley. He was always wanting his time—to dream and to paint and to loaf and to exercise. He had never imagined any one bereft of a thing to do with time. She might be weary of tennis and dancing—but there were so many, many other things!

"But surely——" he began, and stopped, not certain that he should speak his thoughts.

It seemed to amuse her to excite his wonder, like telling monster tales to a child in the growing dark just to watch widening wonder eyes.

"Life is a great bore," she went on, "a fake—a joke put over by old Nature, like a side show at the circus. We pay so much to get in and, once in, we find we are sold. There's nothing worth the price. We are terribly sold."

He regarded her sorrowfully.

"What are you thinking?"

Wesley loved life. He had never once speculated on whether it was worth while. It was so worth while that he was willing to sell men's ties and handkerchiefs, the first half, if only he might do that other thing that beckoned, the last half.

"There is a reason," he said very earnestly. "Something in your life has disappointed or discouraged you." He stopped and studied her face. Over his own—slender, dark, sensitive—swept rebellion. "God never yet made anything lovely that the devil didn't

put a cankerworm near to jeopardize its very existence. We learn this—we workers in the soil. The more exquisitely lovely, the more surely the cankerworm. You have a cankerworm—and you don't know it."

"And so—you are an agriculturalist! You look like one!" she laughed derisively.

Wesley was too preoccupied to catch it that she had been wondering about him. Joey would have seized that information in a flash. Her sister came just then, with her ugly gray knitting, and the golden girl rose and went away with her, nodding slightly as she left.

It was immediately after dinner, and the younger girls had gone away to the courts, leaving her alone. They opened talk with the war.

"It would tempt me to enlist with the Foreign Legion," he said, looking up from his evening paper and news of a bomb raid on London, "if one could go direct for the kaiser. But I couldn't stomach pitching into those German chaps."

She smiled ironically.

"I admire the kaiser tremendously," she said, and, at his surprised expression, she added, "Think of having such an absorbing interest in anything!"

"You don't mean it," he answered quickly, with almost hurt reproof; then added, "That's the cankerworm talking."

She colored.

"My brother-in-law is German," she explained. "Naturally, we sympathize with both sides."

"We use German farm labor. It's always honest and hard working—and I sympathize with the boys, too."

They were on common ground once more.

"Would you really like to go?" she inquired, making conversation.

"No. I have a horror—I admit it's unmanliness—of things ugly. They

hurt me—physically hurt me—to read about. I'm afraid I should prove what is called a coward. I'm afraid I should run."

"I can understand that. Some of my friends have gone as nurses. I should faint, I know, at sight of those ghastly wounds. My brother-in-law tried to interest me in founding a hospital. I sent the money—to please him—but I couldn't think of going myself. And, anyway, what is it all about? Why go out and get shot to pieces? What's the object? I can't sympathize with this war. It seems such rot. It's one thing in which I can't follow—my brother-in-law."

Wesley caught an idea:

"It was a—German hospital?"

"Naturally."

Something disturbed Wesley's mind. The thing kept him quiet while they both looked out upon the placid water. At last it got itself into words:

"You—you rely greatly on your brother-in-law?"

"Of course. He's the only man in our family."

Something held Wesley's tongue. Something was struggling in his perceptions, something disturbing. He wished for Joey.

But presently the beauty of the evening in the sun's late afterglow captured his mood.

"That luscious color through the mist above the still water—it might be the breath of roses, expiring with the day," he said softly.

"It might be the life blood of wounded boys now moaning out their agony on European battlefields," she came back brutally. He turned to her, startled. "You know, really, you don't take life very seriously—for the times," she added reprovingly. "You're rather a spoiled youth."

He stiffened.

"Really, Miss—Miss——"

"Miss Templeton, of New York. And you?"

"Bain—Wesley Bain, of——"

"Illinois, agriculturalist," she finished for him, with one of her ironical laughs. She leaned forward. "I can see the grime of the fields under those nails and hear cutworms and potato bugs cheep from your pockets." She laughed again. She seemed to regard him as a huge joke—or to want him to think she so regarded him.

"Just the same, I have hoed onions much of my life, even if right now——" He broke off, remembering Joey, and ended: "I may not be hoeing onions. Onions are not yet planted," he added, growing light in his turn. "It isn't time to hoe onions."

The sister came just then, and the two went for a walk on the beach. As they passed down the steps, two men smoking near the veranda rail followed the pair with their eyes. Wesley overheard one say to the other:

"Mrs. Schorer takes mighty good care of her sister."

So that was who they were! Wesley remembered the firm name—the Templeton & Schorer Steel Works. Well—money enough! Joey could have saved his scorn. But it wasn't the slightest bit of use. Wesley became depressed. He was to see Joey the next evening, and he had no progress to report. A full week of living on Joey's money, while Joey cooked cabbage and weiners over a gas plate!

He was starting away, meaning to get a magazine, when one of the two men accosted him familiarly and asked for a match. He stopped, accommodated, and was invited to a seat. Both men were middle-aged, bald, and commercial minded. He mentally noted their names to report to Joey—Schnabe and Terry. He sat the remainder of the evening talking with the two of bonds, war babies, tips, and the situation on the stock market caused by the war.



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Clarence Rowe

He had heard it all from Joey, night after night, and he found himself, when put to the test, perfectly familiar with the vocabulary. When he said good night, both men shook hands with him heartily. He knew he had made two apparent friends of the hotel "set" with whom he could fraternize. As he crossed the wide veranda on his way to his room, he passed a group of gig-

gling girls in another of the many cosy porch bowers.

"Wonder who he is. Terribly good looking. We'll get Lora to introduce us. Wonder if he dances."

He went to bed both elated and depressed. He had something to tell Joey—and he had something that he could not tell Joey.

The following evening being Satur-

day, every one was out early—that is to say, the men who ran millionaire businesses downtown while their wives and daughters knitted two-bit socks on the verandas. Wesley set his mind firmly to begin accomplishing something, to have something very definite and hopeful to report to Joey that night. A letter from his mother saying that Martha was not a bit well had brought his family problem sharply to the fore. He was on the veranda early, before dinner, and one of the two acquaintances of the evening before spoke to him cordially. Young men often have valuable tips, and, besides, men of their type—one-ideaed, money-grooved, poor entertainers—get shifted to one side by the livelier folk of fashionable hotels. The young man was refreshing.

"What was that you were telling Terry and me last night about a corner in carrots?" The elder, Schnabe, of Schnabe & Gresham, bond merchants, made the opening. "I was telling Gresham to-day—Gresham, meet Mr. Bain, a young man who knows the market—though he's tight about himself."

The young man who "knew the market" looked honestly from one to the other, and his reticence, along with his perfect courtesy, helped the situation. Wesley quoted Joey scandalously.

While they were deep in talk, two of the giggling girls came up and demanded things. They hung on until at last Schnabe took the hint:

"My daughter, Mr. Bain—and Miss Terry. There now, run along. We're talking business."

The girls ran along, but with backward glances and surreptitious giggles.

Wesley was not pleased—till he remembered. The more attractive of the two was Schnabe's daughter, and Schnabe—he knew—had money, piles of money. He sighed deeply. It swept through his consciousness that it

wouldn't be a crime. Nothing of that sort that you could do to Schnabe, or to Schnabe's daughter, would be a crime. Schnabe had made his first money pushing small businesses to the wall. No, it wouldn't be a crime, but his heart was like lead.

After dinner—the golden girl had been absent, and though Wesley had watched the door with absorbed attention, he had not been rewarded—he finished his smoke on the veranda. He shunned the three men—Terry had come out later—for he was in a mood to watch the floating red mist on the lake and think of her. And then he recalled her comparison. It was as incongruous with the loveliness of her as a thorn on a rosebush. He wondered if she had been right, if he did appear a spoiled youth. Maybe she would think more of him if she knew the truth.

Good God, not the whole truth! His face burned. He threw away his cigar and got up to walk off the unpleasantness, and met face to face the two girls to whom he had been introduced the evening before. They giggled, stopped; he bowed and would have passed on, but all at once he remembered his midnight appointment with Joey. What does one say to giggling girls? He recalled the old days at South Corners. Girls were all the same, Joey had said.

"Well, let's make it a threesome," he suggested, and walked between the two. He was indifferent, but determined.

"Won't you play tennis?" asked Miss Schnabe, while Miss Terry giggled. "We were wanting a fourth."

He did not play particularly well, for his heart was not in the game, but neither did the two buds. Their hearts were not in it, either. Everything he said was tremendously amusing. He drew in his roaming thoughts long enough to observe Miss Schnabe critically. She had rather a

sweet face—fair, with light, dull-colored curls lying about it, and wide, candid blue eyes; she was a nice, plump, amiable little girl, rather boy crazy just now owing to a recent release from boarding school. The thickness of her ankles was repeated in her waist, neck, and wrists, but it suggested stolidity rather than coarseness. She was not red—and she was amiable—and, in the phraseology of South Corners, she “had a case.” His South Corners experience had not left him dull in these matters.

The other girl was scrawny and pimply, equally young, equally boy crazy. Neither could be over eighteen—if that. They were nice enough girls, if they did play tennis abominably. He hoped they danced better.

They did—especially Miss Schnabe—Minnie Schnabe. She told him that was her name and asked for his. Wesley—she liked Wesley for a name. She always had liked Wesley for a name. Did—did his friends ever call him Wes? That was a pretty name, too. She had named her Chinese poodle “West”—because he had come from out West—but he had died. That had been at school. Her mother thought her too young to be out. She wasn’t really out—she would have her coming-out party at Christmas time. She hoped he would come. Would he come? Hetty—Hetty Terry—— That was her friend’s name. Didn’t he think Hetty a pretty name? She did. Well, Hetty would come out at the same time, and they would have their parties together. She and Hetty had been chums for years. They had gone to the same boarding school. It was in New York. Her mother thought New York gave more culture. Her school was just off Fifth Avenue. Wasn’t Fifth Avenue just grand? Their school was very charitable. The girls had earned money for the Belgian Relief Fund by making their own beds. It had saved

a maid, and the money had gone into the cunningest jar with an ivory elephant on top. They had put their candy money in, too; during Lent, all their candy money had gone into the jar.

Yes, it was a very philanthropic school. Mother had liked that. She had said that girls should learn to give up things. But didn’t he just love chocolates? It was hard to give up chocolates, but they made her fat. They didn’t make Hetty fat——

He put “chocolates” on his imaginary list.

It was during his dance with the pimply Hetty, and he was listening to much the same chatter, only the “chocolates made her complexion bad.” And didn’t he think Minnie just the sweetest name? At school, they had spelled their names “Minna” and “Hetta.” Did he like that? Minnie was sweet—didn’t he think so? She really was just the sweetest girl. His name was Wesley? She loved Wesley for a name, too. She had had a dog at school——

It was at the dog that he saw her, and a shiver of delight ran through him. He almost lost step. She paused a moment at the ballroom door with her sister. Then they strolled on to the veranda, but she had seen him. He caught in the instant’s flash her amused, slightly scornful expression on seeing him whirling in the dance with the angular and youthful Miss Terry. She wore pale lavender to-night, with shimmery pink beneath and a shell-pink scarf about her slender shoulders. She looked bored—more so than usual—and cynical. That was it—cynical.

He had a dance again with Minnie—he had taken the dance—but as he was seating the flushed and radiant young girl, he observed Mrs. Schorer returning to the ballroom with her two charges. He hurried outside. He hurried too fast, but he had no control of his legs, while two pairs of round,

childish eyes followed him with disappointment.

"I thought—I was afraid you had gone," he said breathlessly, without other greeting.

She answered with indifference, but her eyes lighted up.

"No—I'm here for some time—till hot weather, probably. You see, my sister is chaperoning her nieces—her husband's nieces—and her son. My brother-in-law is very busy abroad."

He sat down with relief.

"May I?" he asked, afterward.

She laughed.

"You assume the answer."

"I can no more help it than I can help gazing across the water at a sunset—in spite of your regarding me as a spoiled youth and reminding me of horrors in red. Frankly, I can't help it. Please—please don't misunderstand!"

"There isn't the slightest danger." She regarded him from an access of aloofness. "You are dancing to-night."

"Yes—I know their fathers," absently.

"Minnie is a nice child. Her mother—" Disgust broke into her voice; she took it up again: "But Minnie is nice, and her children—undoubtedly her grandchildren—will be quite effete."

He did not betray his innocence of the young girl's mother. The two girls had introduced him to a group of fat, middle-aged women, but he had not noticed which was Minnie's mother.

"She attends the same school with the two nieces who are a dead weight on Caroline this summer—twins, coming out this winter. Sometimes they have Minnie come home with them for a week-end. She's a dear little girl, very good hearted—and kind."

They seemed unable to get away from Minnie.

"She will be rich. Her father has made millions since the war began. They were merely well-to-do before."

She observed him critically. "Of course, though, you know all this better than I do."

"Strangely, I do not." And after a moment, "I'm not keen about business and all that sort of thing. I have a friend—Joey—Joey Mills—who would know all about it—how he made it and where he had slipped up—if he had. But I'm not keen that way. I'm sorry."

"Why?"

"Oh, then I might make a fortune of my own."

Presently she suggested, in a slightly ironical tone:

"There are easier ways for a young man to make a fortune. He doesn't need what you refer to as 'business and all that sort of thing.'"

"Tell me just one." His words meant nothing to him; they formed a reason for staying—that was all.

She shrugged.

"All these heiress daughters must have husbands—presentable husbands, if possible. It's quite important that they be—presentable—in many families. There's Minnie—and Hetty is another one. Her father made it, I believe, in copper, or something that comes out of the ground, and he found it first."

He studied her face.

"Could you do that—marry for anything but love?" he asked.

"Why not?" she asked, a trifle sharply. "Love is not the whole of life."

"You are joking." His tone insisted that she must not mean it, could not mean it. It did not go with her make-up to mean it.

"Why not a woman? Most men are seeking to make their fortunes through marriage."

"Oh, Miss Templeton—not most!"

She apparently felt the need of justifying her remark. The color dyed her face, and her eyes flashed.

"All my life, I've been pursued by fortune hunters," she said heatedly.



"Oh, Lordy, is it as bad as that? Infant, you're up against the real thing. Cut it! Beat it for safety with the suspenders kid!"

"You don't know—you can't know—what it is to be hailed in the world as an heiress! I was unsuspicious of the motives of men at first. Well I remember my first party! There was a man—I remember him vividly. He seemed so sincere and jolly and fine. I liked him tremendously. No, don't

misunderstand. I liked him for just what he seemed to be and was not—his frank sincerity. But he turned out a most unscrupulous fortune hunter. And so it has always been. All—all who are possible—presentable—turn out fortune hunters. Unless they are rather possible, they don't try that

game. They try to make it—in business—and all that sort of thing.’”

Wesley was pale, but somehow he was so far removed from her in his own mind that he did not even connect himself with the story.

“How do you know about these men?” he asked.

She lifted her head with a gesture of triumph.

“I am very fortunate. I have a brother-in-law. He knows men. He has been like a faithful bulldog at the portals of my house.”

That night, at midnight, Wesley was perched on a pickle keg in Joey's room at the commission house. Joey sat on the edge of his bed. His bed was a spring resting on four apple boxes. The place smelled dominantly of apples and onions.

To-night Wesley did not know that it smelled of apples and onions. He had dutifully given Joey a full account, in detail, of Schnabe, Schnabe's daughter, and Schnabe's daughter's chum. Joey had nodded comprehendingly all through the recital, much pleased.

“Now keep it up, old man—keep it up—and bring it off before ever there's a coming-out party. You don't need to worry. I know Schnabe's record. Began with a secondhand store—used to stand in his doorway and twist his head on his neck like a swivel, looking up and down the street for customers. That was along when the kid was shaking her first rattle. Then he started in on suspenders, cornered the market. Got so a man couldn't hitch up his galluses on the farthest, forlornest farm in America without paying tribute to Schnabe. And now, since the war, he's made some lucky strikes on the stock market—made millions. Not a bad sort, as business men go. He wouldn't hesitate at anything for money—and don't you. They're mighty lucky to get

you. No doubt she's a nice little thing—will do you proud.”

Wesley was not listening. His head was in his hands, his dark silky hair rumpled by white fingers, his eyes on a spot on the floor where some one had stepped on an overripe tomato. But he did not see the smashed tomato. Abruptly he lifted a white face.

“Joey, do something for me. Ferret this out. What object has Schorer in keeping Lora Templeton from marriage?”

Joey stared; his small eyes widened. Then he emitted a long, low whistle.

“Oh, Lordy, is it as bad as that? Infant, you're up against the real thing. Cut it! Beat it for safety with the suspenders kid!”

But Wesley's eyes pleaded from his white face.

Joey shook himself into greater uprightness. He was getting fat. Always, Joey's clothes seemed too tight for him, no matter how carefully he was fitted. His hair, never abundant, was fast thinning on top. His complexion was a putty color, and his nose shone. His eyes now took on their ferrety expression.

“I know Schorer's history.” Was there a man of wealth in America whose history he did not know? “He's a German—an officer in the reserves—been in this country twenty years or more. Good German family—well educated—but had nothing when he came over. He was credit man in the Templeton steel works. Templeton always distrusted him. His manager had employed him, and Templeton was game—wouldn't drop him for personal reasons. Then he began to show attention to Templeton's daughter—and that finished him. Templeton had him discharged, but did the handsome thing—paid him a full year's salary and gave him letters.

“He took the money and followed Miss Templeton to Europe; followed

her back; persisted—no end. She wasn't keen—I've heard—but he stuck—several years. Finally met her in Europe and got her to marry him without her father's consent. It killed the old man. He felt as if a leech were on him, sucking his lifeblood—couldn't stand it.

"Schorer came back at once and took over the business, handled his wife's income, in time got into favor with the old lady and handled hers till she died. Then the next move was to control Miss Templeton's share, which, I have heard, is the bulk of the estate. If she never marries—never has any children—the whole thing comes into his hands eventually, intact—through his son. He's enlarged the original Templeton plant, but there's a rumor that he's been drawing in all the securities and reinvesting them in Germany. And that, my boy, is the answer. You might as well go up against the kaiser as Herr Schorer. He's more German than he is husband, father—or brother-in-law. They don't consider women, those Germans."

Wesley was silent.

"Don't buck that, son. You can't pull it off. Go in for little suspenders. That'll be easy."

That night Wesley walked by the lake until dawn.

He met Miss Templeton after dinner with a directness that put that suspicious young woman at once on the defensive, but she did not dismiss him.

"Miss Templeton," he began, when alone with her in the arbor, "do you believe in God?"

She was obviously startled out of her aloofness, but the irony remained in her voice.

"Don't ask me to believe," she said, "that you are also a divinity student!"

"I'm asking you to believe nothing about me. I am of less consequence—than that rose you're so cruelly mutilating. But do you believe in God?"

She leaned away from him, but she ceased pulling at the petals of the handsome blush rose.

"Christian Scientists, mental healers, spiritualists—along with the purely orthodox varieties—they all come to me for all sorts of assistance. And now you—when I had had the delightful imprudence to pick up a stray acquaintance—because I thought him—" She broke off, sighed, took on her habitual air of boredom, and finished, "How much of a donation will do you? You know we are called on pretty heavily these times, with the Red Cross, Belgian Relief, ambulances, and so on."

Poor Wesley! His case was difficult. The perspiration stood out on his forehead in faint pearls. His large brown eyes narrowed with the intensity of his earnestness—and his despair.

"Please, Miss Templeton, it's as you thought. You did pick up a stray. And please—I am no more a—divinity student—or a philanthropist's agent — 'Oh, what can I say? I can say nothing if you won't believe me, for I have no proof of anything to show you. You must believe your own impression. Can't you believe your own impression?"

"You are at least diverting."

"I'm at least honest—with you. A thing has come to me to do. I can't begin to do it unless I find something that you swear by, something that you are not—suspicious about. Is it God?"

"Go on," she said with a show of patience. "I'm listening," she added, when he didn't go on.

He watched her in distress.

She dropped her lids, began again to tear at the rose, stopped, and then spoke.

"I said I was listening," she repeated as to a rather spoiled child.

"Sometimes," he began in earnest effort, "years ago, when I have been plowing in the early morning, and the newly turned earth took on a rich, red-



At dinner the German bulked large in his family group. He was noticeably attentive to Miss Templeton. Wesley could see that—or was it his heated imagination?

dish warmth from the sun's first rays, and everything smelled so fresh and warm and young—at its beginning some way, unpolluted—and then a lark would fly up from the brush and sing—I would all at once feel still inside—so very still—and like listening. And something deep down would tell me,

'This' is God.' I never told any one this before. It's not easy to tell. It's like turning your soul naked. But did you ever feel anything like it?"

She did not raise her eyelids.

"Sometimes," she said, very low, "way in the night—when I can't sleep—and the world seems such a silly

mess—and there's no serious purpose in any of it—nothing get-atable, nothing to hold fast to or to believe in—and I go round and round and round—till I feel as if I'd scream out in a minute—I quiet myself by appealing to God. It's a sort of cowardly last refuge. But it does take away the blackness, and I gain poise—and peace—and after a time I go to sleep. I believe in God that much—something takes away the blackness—and I sleep."

"Then—there is a God. He must have had an idea in creating the human race."

"I suppose so," wearily, "but I can't applaud the idea."

"And His only way to carry out His big idea is through the people He created?"

"Well, yes."

"Every one of us, then, is created for carrying out part of His idea."

"I—presume so."

"Some are made exceedingly sensitive—to be superfine instruments for the most subtle suggestions of God, like exquisite beauty. But those made so supersensitive run the very great danger of becoming instruments for—others than God. What I mean is, if I knew you intimately and was a dominant sort of person, and had an idea of my own that I wanted put over very intensely, I could so dominate you with my idea that you would carry it out in the world—instead of God's."

"Hypnotism, suggestion—my dear youth, there's nothing new in all that."

"But wait—please! I'm just working this out myself, and it isn't so terribly plain. I worked it out last night by the lake. Without exactly hypnotizing, a very strong, one-ideaed person could just about control the actions—even the attitude of mind—of a very sensitive-natured one. He could make that other life almost nonexistent—certainly ineffective—if he had a personal reason for so doing."

"You are diverting, really. Who —" She broke off, lifting her eyes to his with swift question.

"Some one to whose interest it has been to keep you from marriage—from having children—heirs—from a life of your own; some one who has fed you on suspicion of all men that he might himself eventually control the Templeton estate, possibly to hand it over to the kaiser."

She stood suddenly, and the rose fell at her feet. Her eyes blazed and her nostrils quivered.

He told himself that he would never speak with her again, but he must fire his full load. He, too, stood, and his face was equally white.

"Your father distrusted—and hated him." His words came thickly, stumbly, but they came. "He's a German officer—and it would be his 'bit.' The Germans scarcely permit a woman a soul. He's sweeping you out of his way like so much—sawdust. You must arouse, and meet the situation." He paused, trembling, but he had one more shot. "You owe it to your father—and to your country."

An hour later, his face still pale, his eyes wide with the shock of his own temerity, he was hearing from Minnie Schnabe in the waltz:

"I just love this waltz, don't you? They wouldn't let us turkey-trot or anything at school, but we did it, anyway, in our rooms—the bunny-hug and just everything. We never had any men to dance with, though. There used to be the handsomest postman; that is, the other girls thought he was handsome. One of the girls was just crazy about him. She had her mother send her a special-delivery letter, so he would have to come in and she could talk to him. And then what do you think? They sent the special delivery by a special postman, and he had cross eyes. Wasn't that funny? I never

Miss

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thought the regular postman so awfully good looking. He was fair. I don't like fair men. Dark ones are so much more romantic—and I just love curling lashes. I wish mine curled. A girl in school——”

And then he danced with Hetty, who giggled all the way through. And then he met both the mammas—both fat, exuding lace and diamonds. And still later, he smoked with Papa Schnabe and talked war babies and tips and the probable effect on the wheat market of the president's notes to Germany. Also, he outlined a scheme of Joey's for cornering cabbages.

“That's it,” snatched Schnabe, “corner a necessity. That's what I said when I went into suspenders. Everybody's gotta have 'em—so corner 'em.”

As he was lighting Schnabe's third cigar, he saw her come up the side steps from the lake, a nebulous figure, moving ghostily through the dark.

Once in a while, a hero is heralded, a man who deliberately offers himself to perform a service in which every chance is against his coming out alive. Such a man receives much newspaper notice, and, if he survives, medals. Wesley had risked everything; he expected nothing for himself, much less the acclaim due a hero, and now he was not sorry. So, his own life dead, grimly he gave himself to the duties of the hour. He played tennis with Minnie, he danced with Minnie, he bought chocolates for Minnie—and he talked endlessly of tips with Minnie's papa. He varied the program by sharing himself with Hetty and such other of the two girls' friends as he met. The golden girl remained away from the veranda. When at last, after several days, she did reappear, she was continually with her sister or one of the younger girls. Once she bowed to him with the cool formality one shows a bare acquaintance.

On Saturday, Schorer came, a com-

manding figure—large, solid, square bodied, square faced, with deep-set, rivety eyes and fiercely waxed, upturned blond mustaches. Wesley's first shocked impression was of a certain likeness between Joey and Schorer. This likeness lay principally in the steady concentration of the steely-blue eyes, a thing matured and fixed in the older man and just beginning in Joey.

At dinner the German bulked large in his family group. His wife seemed distracted by his presence; it was as if some one had left something on her hands for which she was responsible, but she hardly knew what to do with it. She had the uneasy self-consciousness that one sometimes sees in married women in whom there is apparently no real companionship with their husbands. Schorer was noticeably attentive to Miss Templeton. Wesley could see that—or was it his heated imagination? He could see the ponderous German talking to her in that steadily authoritative manner of one who knows; he was as God.

Wesley whitened during the dinner. Later, he smoked with the Schnabe group, and they spent the time discussing Schorer—how he had made money, how he gave his whole time to business, never did anything else. Only way to get on. Other men should take notice of Schorer's methods. A business genius—typical American success.

Wesley went away to dance with Minnie. Once, in the dance, she said timidly:

“Do you think those thin girls—so terribly thin—are pretty? I don't. They don't look healthy. Mother says they have nerves. Wouldn't you hate to have nerves? Lora Templeton has nerves—just terribly!”

Involuntarily he clutched the young girl with hard fingers to close off that name from her lips, but she looked up into his face and smiled shyly.

That night he talked with Joey.

"Buck up, Wes, and pull it off," Joey urged, slapping his shoulder. "You say yourself you don't even aspire to the Temp——"

Wesley looked up from his pickle keg with a mute, pleading face, and Joey was silenced. But presently he began again, not unkindly:

"Old man, you're hard hit." Silence. He kicked a turnip into a corner; then he took a more hopeful tack. "They say—after a year or so—it's all the same, whichever girl you marry—that all that—dies out. You can get the suspenders kid, and I ain't such a fool as to encourage you to think you could pull down the other. Don't go and spoil everything, Wes. Go in for little suspenders."

Wesley's head was in his hands. He made no answer. Joey uncrossed his legs and crossed them again.

"There's the little old farm—still needing new machinery," he threw out casually. "There's Martha—still milking the cows. There's your dad—still rheumatic. They're all there—just the same as they were when you moved to the Lakeside. Here's Joey—among the vegetables. Not a thing's changed, Wes, since you went to living swell."

Wesley groaned.

"They're all waiting, Wes. I'm waiting. I can't get any other answer."

Wesley got up, desperation in his white face.

"Men are facing worse for home and mother across the pond," Joey went on. His ear caught a loved sound. "Extra! Wonder what's happened? What it'll do the market?" He rushed out of the back door and around to the street for the paper.

He found Wesley still staring wretchedly into space. He jerked down his ugly horn glasses, hooked them quickly over his nose, and looked at his paper.

"Great fish—war!"

Wesley hardly heard.

"It's war! We're in it—with the kaiser!"

Wesley jerked back to the facts of life.

"We? Uncle Sam—us?"

"You bet us with a big U! Well, I'm damned!" Joey's nearsighted eyes glued to the printed details.

"We—are at war?" Wesley repeated.

But Joey was already off:

"That'll make a crash! Everything'll be spinning round! It'll mean the greatest food speculation ever known—and eventually food control! It means it's the last chance! I gotta do it right now, before ever a food-control bill can get through Congress! Gosh darn it, if I had my innings, with this slow outfit, I'd make my stake! God! I've gotta have 'em! I've gotta get action! Action!" He flew to the telephone and called his boss.

The shock of war removed the barrier. She spoke to him humanly the following evening, as he sat dejectedly on the veranda.

"I presume you will be enlisting," she said, pausing with her magazine on her way to her nook. Her sister had stopped near for a chat with some matrons.

He was on his feet instantly.

"If I only could!" The leap in his eyes proved his sincerity.

She looked at him strangely, considering their last conversation.

"Come tell me why you can't—and why you want to when, by your own account, you are a coward. I don't think, however, that you are a coward."

He followed her to the arbor. It was as if a new lease of life had been granted a condemned man.

"So many may be saying it—from what I hear downtown—that I hate like the mischief to offer it as an excuse, but the blunt truth is I have a mother and a sister more or less dependent on me. That is, they will be. Farming

is slow, and my father is—not at all well. They've held on, waiting for me to accomplish things—and I haven't accomplished things. I don't know that I have the right."

"A certain little girl would break her heart if you should go," she said.

He started; then regained his poise.

"She's a nice little girl—but I think you're mistaken."

"Young girls are very impressionable. I remember."

"Some one will warn her. They did you."

"I think Minnie will not accept a warning. I admire Minnie."

He was hardly following her about Minnie.

"Candidly," she said, "is it fair to play with a little girl like that?"

"I haven't played with her."

"Oh."

The young man had nothing to say, not quite clear about the interpretation of that "Oh."

"It would appeal to Minnie to be a war bride. All the debs would think it romantic." Her tone was consciously light.

He looked at her with beseeching eyes.

"Don't!" he pleaded.

She dropped her eyelids; then presently:

"It may interest you to know that I began studying first aid to-day. I shall go to France."

"You?" He was startled.

"Why not? I thought it in line with your suggestion."

"For Heaven's sake, don't! The Germans may yet get into Paris."

"I shall go prepared," she said. "I shall never get into a German's hands—and stay—long."

"Miss Templeton!" On the impulse, his shaking hand covered hers. "If anything I have said has put this idea into your mind——" He broke off. "God, how I love you!"

Her eyes met his and held for a moment. Her face was white.

"Careful." The word came almost in a whisper. "My brother-in-law is coming."

He did not dance with Minnie that evening, nor the next; neither did he see Joey.

The two long evenings he paced by the lake shore, past the very benches on which he and Joey had sat so often, he idly dreaming, Joey cogitating on the future. But he didn't see the benches; he didn't see the lake tumbling roughly at his feet; he didn't see the distant lights of the Lakeside Hotel. He saw only a pair of deep, green-gray eyes through which love had flamed. Till he died, he would see those eyes. Till he died, he would feel the touch of her delicate hand. And she loved him! The marvel of it! The glory wonder of it! Wave after wave of fierce emotion swept over him as he recalled the sweet, warm breath of her, the goldenness of her. And then he saw her, too, as a helpless prisoner in a cage—a thing all delicacy, like a butterfly, behind harsh, ugly bars. It was his to liberate——

The second night had turned off blustery and cold, with a swift, driving rain. The park was empty. All comfortable-minded people were indoors. It was a rough, tearing wind, a wind that caught you and fought you, but he did not know that the wind blew. He faced it blindly, insensibly.

A figure in a raincoat emerged from a park path. He turned to avoid it, grasping frantically at his hat, which a peculiarly wicked gust lifted.

"Wait—Mr. Bain!"

He stopped. It was Lora Templeton, a slim, swaying reed against the heavy wind, the rain making diamond drops in her hair. He quickly caught her arm and held her firmly against the wind's force; then, without a word, they began to walk together. She leaned

against him; he put an arm about her and forced their measured pacing. The rain beat in their faces.

"If it would only storm forever!" he whispered between cold, wet lips. She drew consciously nearer him.

In a shadowy area between the arc lights, he abruptly stopped and, taking her face between his hands, looked deep and long into its rain-washed loveliness. Then, deliberately, possessively, he put his arms about her, drew her—all wet, but warm, pulsing, deep in the stiff, wet coat—into his arms. Slowly his lips met hers in a long, long kiss.

She yielded herself up to him completely. It was as if she wanted him to know how instinctively she was all his. Then she drew gently away. Her action said that there were other matters to consider.

"I must talk with you," she told him. "I must tell you I have thought over all you said." Her voice steadied as she went on. "I knew then you were right. I have always felt his—dominance—like a weight coming down ever more steadily upon me. At first—years ago—I opposed him. I opposed everything he suggested. But it made unending family friction. My mother was—different. He managed the estate well, he showed her increasing profits, and she was satisfied. Naturally my



She yielded herself up to him completely. It was as if she wanted him to know how instinctively she was all his.

sister was more or less—satisfied. I couldn't go on making family friction, and so I gave way.

"I used to feel limp—even ill—after he had spent an evening with us. I always feel like a rag when he goes—even now—but I had got used to accepting his word. When my father was dying, he said to me—and I was only a tiny child, 'You are the only hope, Lora.' I didn't understand then. He saw what would happen. He hoped—I would hold out. It was his mastering dominance that my father hated so.

He mastered my father—sufficiently to stay on long after my father wanted to be rid of him. He mastered my sister—my mother—and he has all but mastered me.

"But now at last I am fully awake. I believe all that you say is true—or else why those German investments? I've been thinking—and praying to your God of the fields—to give me strength to go into things—and for what I am going to do. I would do it now in the face of—an avalanche of opposition. But first I must know one thing about you! I haven't made inquiries. I shall follow my impression as you suggested. I shall not ask about your business—your income—your habits. I shall ask none of the usual questions. But I must have one assurance—just one—and from your own lips. Give me that and I will marry you—if you wish—to-morrow—and together we will——"

She stopped. He waited, tense, pressed with her against the storm.

She said, taking it up again and speaking steadily, but with a high metallic ring in her voice:

"I must know that you did not come to the Lakeside as a fortune hunter."

He tried to speak; he moistened his lips; he contracted his throat; but no words came. He tried again and again.

She waited—a brief second. His arms fell from about her. She threw her hands to her face, turned, and ran through the night and the storm.

When it became known that Wesley Bain had enlisted, South Corners friends of the old days made such comments as these: "Don't worry. They won't take Wes." "He'll be picking up a gun, Wes, and saying, 'Which end of the darn' thing do you shoot, anyway?'" "I can just see Wes on the firing line looking dreamily across the trenches and saying, 'Ah, those are nice little Germans! I won't kill 'em.'"

"He'll be making pictures of the trenches to send home."

But in the training camp, they knew a silent, concentrated young man, all sinew and threaded purpose, who obeyed orders automatically, asked no favors, and worked like a slave driver. As a reaction from the first numbing pain, the agony of loss had left him charged with hatred—a hard, cold, cruel hatred which made him the best fitted, perhaps, of all the clean-limbed, idealistic-minded young men of the camp, for the business to be done in France. These boys had enlisted, generally, in the first flush of awakened patriotism; some because they wanted a trip or to escape planting corn. He had enlisted grimly to punish an enemy.

And so, while other young men wearied of the routine of drill, Wesley went at it avidly. He drilled for an enemy; he shot for an enemy; he endured for an enemy—an enemy with steely-cold eyes and blond mustaches that turned up.

As the days lengthened into weeks, this one idea began to shrink. It was no longer big enough to fill his entire mind. Empty spaces came, and into these spaces came another conception—at first glimmeringly, then more steadily—and it spread until it enveloped the original conception. And now it was no longer the one German that he drilled for, but the race at this German's back, the kaiser leading. He drilled, he shot, he practiced bayonet charges—for them all. They must be exterminated; the breed must die out. It was the religious thing to do, the God-willed thing.

But little by little even this conception of what he was about failed to occupy his entire mind, and again empty spaces came, and into these spaces swept still another conception, and he saw that it wasn't the German bodies that were a danger to the world, but the German idea of mastery, of self-enrichment of the strong at the expense

of the weak. And the only known way to overcome this idea was for body to overcome body.

And then even this conception left empty spaces, and still another swept in, and spread, and he became obsessed with it. He saw that it was not merely German dominance by force—it was all dominance by force that was wrong. And the frightful dominance of the times was money dominance, everywhere. It was not confined solely to Germany. He saw that the enemy of the peace and happiness of the world was money madness in a few men's veins and brains, and that his own country was fast becoming poisoned.

Money madness now stood out in his mind, a definite, concrete figure, a monster in whose eyes he caught the steely cold of Schorer's eyes. Those enlisted in this monster's service had considered no price too great to pay. He remembered how even Joey—good-hearted old Joey—had contemplated the war only in terms of rising or falling stocks. It had given him his opportunity at last, and he had plunged into it. He was now speculating in lifeblood. Wesley had not seen the thing in all its horror at the time—perhaps it had not been sufficiently concrete—but he saw it now. God, how he saw it!

Compared with this coldly calculating speculation in lifeblood, even German atrocities were as child's play. They butchered and killed only an enemy whom they hated; but at the behest of this other monster, men bought and sold—created personal fortunes—in their fellow countrymen's lifeblood.

Only Wesley's body was steadily occupied; his mind was free for impressions, and he had no chance to push them aside with the opiate of books or sketching. He must face things.

And so he drilled—and drilled—and drilled.

And then it came thunderingly that

this same money madness was what had wrecked him. He, too, had enlisted in the monster's service—enlisted life, fine, fresh, young-bodied life—and he had lost everything, even the power to serve her. He had done worse than that. He had aroused her from her disbelief, had given her a new faith, a new hope—and then he had dashed both.

When this came to him, he was away from camp on a long Sunday walk, alone. He sat down by the roadside and cried like a baby.

At the end of several months, he was made second lieutenant. He was surprised—and relieved—when he heard about the pay; he could send most of it home to his mother. Vaguely he was comforted that his mother would have more money to handle than she had ever had before, because he was going out to kill. They would buy some new dresses. He could see Martha getting samples from Chicago and laying them critically out on the dining-room table for inspection. They both loved nice things. And he could begin to pay Joey back!

Just before he sailed, he wrote them cheerfully. He was first lieutenant now and could send even more money. But aboard ship, the blue water and the white-spray in his face, under the golden sun, brought back with cruel abruptness the long, long look in her green-gray eyes when he had first caught love there. Through the strong sea breeze, he felt again the contact of her slight, sensitive body in its wet coat as the wind from Lake Michigan pressed her against him. He relived it all till he nearly went out of his mind. And there was only the deck for pacing.

A senior officer, watching the young lieutenant pacing there alone, called his aid's attention to him. Wesley's face was thin and leathery now, his eyes fixed.



And so his body slipped in and out of the wet and the slime under screaming shot and shell, while his mind traveled on that safe upper rail—and he kept his trench sanity.

"The makings of a perfect officer," he said.

"And yet," his aid came back, "they tell me he was deciding tie styles for particular buyers a few months ago."

"The war is making over a lot of our young men," the colonel answered briefly.

They were complaining in the American prints of the general apathy of

America toward the war. They were saying that a few thousand American boys would have to be killed before America would fully arouse. Wesley read it in a Chicago daily Joey had sent him some weeks after they had been in camp in France. Well, he hoped he would last till he had Joey entirely paid back. He was insured for his mother and sister. He crushed aside the daily. One of his boys was blubbering over his home paper, back of a small brown tent. His sweetheart had died—the one they wouldn't let him marry for fear he'd be called a slacker. Wesley wanted to comfort him, but—

It was said that they were to drill all winter. Wesley was afraid for the first time since enlisting, afraid of his idle brain through so many months. The thing was not wearing out; it got worse. And then came a change of orders. The first American unit was to go into the trenches, to see action.

A stony coldness had come to envelop Wesley. He had seen death after death. He had been sickened by decaying corpses. He had steeled his nerves and his nostrils. He knew it was but a matter of time, and he had

only to endure. They would all go—in time—and Wesley did not care. The noxious odors, the frightful sights, the steady danger had familiarized him with the thing. He told himself that it mattered little how many went out, it mattered little how many stayed. He had acquired a transient attitude toward the earth, like an insect caught in the slime of a dung heap. Soon its wings would be loaded with the weight of matter. Soon they would cease to whip the air. Life would go out as miraculously as it had come in, and another body would attract more flies.

But through all the black horror of his ghastly duties, the light of one pure, high torch never wavered—the torch of her. All this that they were doing was to serve her, to make her safe in the world. At times she represented France, at others, Belgium, and always Beauty in the world.

A phase of madness may have steadied Wesley—a madness that kept him intact from the madness that so often followed shell and shrapnel, staring corpse eyes and gaping horrors in living flesh. And so his body slipped in and out of the wet and the slime under screaming shot and shell, while his mind traveled on that safe upper rail—and he kept his trench sanity.

And then—and then—even this was not enough. Other spaces came into his mind—unfilled spaces—and into them one day came crashing still another conception, and he shrank from what he saw—shrank coweringly, pitifully—but he could not push it back, and he lost the safe upper rail where his mind had been wont to travel while his body went among the horrors, and he lost his bearing.

He awakened, stiff and sore and bandaged—bandaged to blindness. He moved his hands. He felt something strange—sheets. Then it came back—the shell!

He put his hands to his bandaged head—his face. He wanted to see. It was so dark.

Suddenly he ceased exploring the bandages and the sheets and lay very still. It had come to him that he might go out—might even now be going out. A need to speak leaped up in him like a flame. He had sent only perfunctory letters home, nothing to “worry the folks.” His sister had written more than once begging him to send something for the home paper, something about the trenches and how they cooked their food and everything. She was proud. She had asked him to send some sketches, too, and he had never done it. He had never written anything that really mattered, that would make a difference. But it wasn’t his sister to whom he wished to write, or his mother, or the home paper. It was Joey; he wanted to write to Joey.

The thing mounted. He must write to Joey—what he had to say was all for Joey. His fingers began to twitch, to move excitedly. He must have a pencil. He must have the bandages off. He must write, and write quickly.

“Do you want something, Lieutenant Bain?” asked a woman’s voice, while a firm hand closed warmly over his twitching one. “Are you in pain?”

“Yes—no—not the pain—but I want something. I want these bandages off. I must write at once. Get me paper, please, and a pencil—lots of paper.” His voice was husky, almost a whisper; it had been husky for a long time. “Hurry, please.”

She went away and presently returned with another nurse, a slim young nurse, “the willow nurse,” the men who could see called her. She had golden-ash hair, and deep, green-gray eyes that looked imploringly, appealingly, at one, all charged with the urge to help. Not being a regular nurse, she had been given the task of writing the letters of the dying.

"Here is some one who will put down all you want to say," the head nurse told him, after again feeling his pulse. "Don't let him write too long," she added in a lower key to the other.

"It's to Joey—Joey Mills, care the American Grain & Commission House, South Water Street, Chicago."

The nurse leaned close. His voice was very husky. He had lain too many hours in the wet of No-Man's Land. She wrote as he dictated.

"Joey," he began, forcing out his words, "you were all wrong. You didn't have the answer right. I've seen in the back of the book—and, Joey, you're wrong."

She wrote; then looked fearfully toward the head nurse. He sounded delirious, and she didn't know what to do. But the head nurse was busy.

"We have thought in America," he went on rushingly, "that the answer to everything was money. You and I dreamed it out that way—way back when we drove the milk wagons. That is, you did. I don't believe I ever thought a really important thought of my own until this war, Joey. I just dreamed. I dreamed of all the beautiful things money could liberate us for—all of us. But I never really thought—'Please underscore that *'thought'* I want Joey to get it. 'I mean I never waked into actual, thinking consciousness of life as something for me definitely to get hold of, till this war.'

"Does that make sense?" he asked anxiously. "It's important that I be plain."

"Yes," she answered unsteadily.

"I accepted your answer, Joey, but you didn't have it right. Money is not the answer. It's that answer that we are fighting. It's money madness—commercialism—that we are fighting right now. It's because the world had gone money mad that nations could get at each other's throats as they are

now doing. It's materialism rampant; it's money in the saddle. It's a small matter, Joey, if a few million boys are killed, just so this monster is unhorsed, and joy, expression, art are put in his place. A few years more or less of life—that is a small item; but that a higher ideal should dominate—that is a great item. Only a horror like this war could destroy a horror like money madness. It's a far better way than to mill around for more generations, all the time getting in a worse fix. The war is all right, Joey. The boys are very serious-minded out here. They all know they will probably die. But they don't mind so much as you would think, for they see life seriously and what matters—out here."

"Is that quite plain?"

"Quite." Her voice was scarcely audible.

"But do you get what I mean?" He was almost fretful. "Joey is—pretty literal. If you get it, maybe he will."

"I get it." She breathed the words.

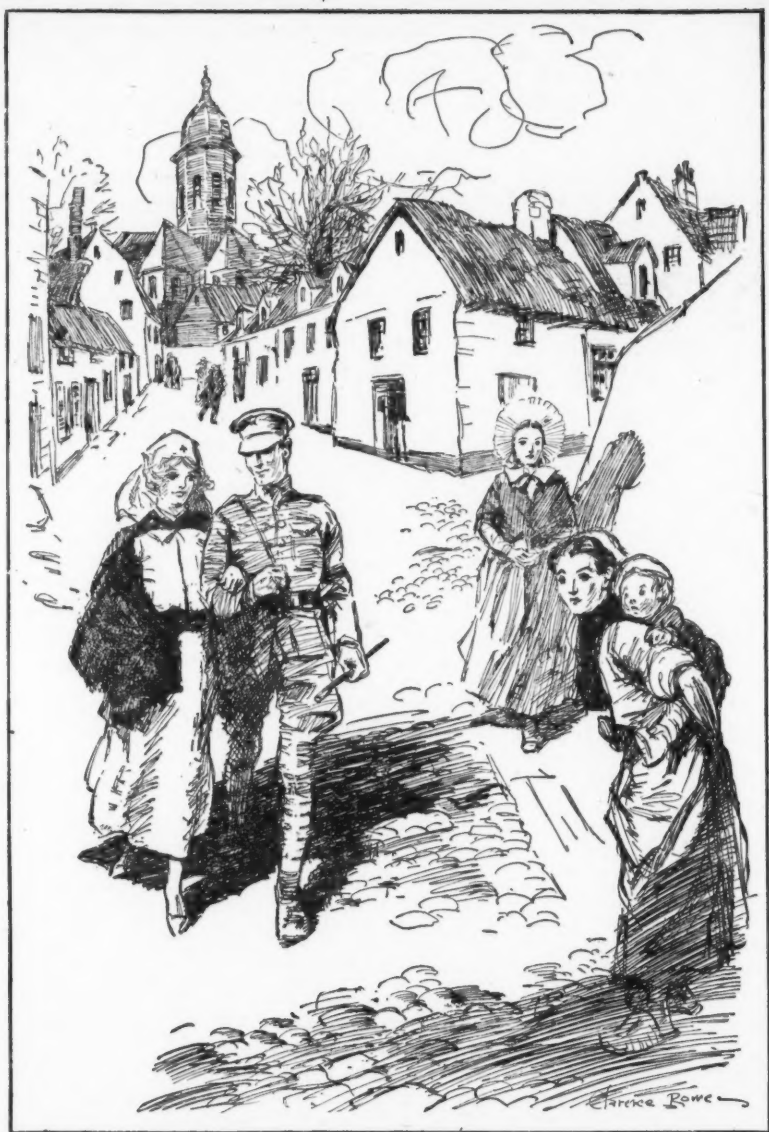
"It is for you who stay on in the world," he took up the letter, "to realize this that I am telling you, or else our sacrifice will have been meaningless. If we who have been awakened to the thing die—all of us—what will be the good to the world? Money is not the answer."

"Please put that down again. I can't say it too often, for Joey is very literal."

"It is down."

"I am very close to the real things, Joey," he went on, "and I want to repeat: Take your eye off the dollar. Tell every one in America, so the nation can get back on a track where it can travel straight toward freedom and progress and happiness, and some leisure for every one—leisure for beautiful living and work that one thrills to—"

His fingers picked rapidly at the sheet.



To the coast of Normandy came one Sabbath morning two Americans—an army officer in khaki and a slim, golden-haired nurse in white.

"Won't you rest now?" coaxed the head nurse, in passing. "It's quite a long letter."

"No—there's no time. I must say something more. It's hard, but it may make Joey understand. He's very literal."

The nurse passed on.

"Joey, you remember there was a girl. I loved her, Joey. But love isn't exactly the word. I loved her breath, her fragrance, the illusive beauty of her. She was all rhythm, music, color. I think at first I didn't love her exactly—humanly, for I never dreamed of possessing her. I loved her as you might a goddess—were there such things as goddesses—or some one from whom you could expect no recompense. And then, Joey, I discovered suddenly that she loved me. It came blindingly. I had said to her, 'Believe,' and she had answered by believing in me, and it dazzled me—it blinded me. Before I was used to it sufficiently to be coherent—to go to her—why, Joey, I lost her. The money madness did it."

"Am I quite clear?"

"Quite."

"I was crazed, I think. Life couldn't go on for me. It was good that I could enlist—good that my country would take me. I drilled fiendishly, but all the time, Joey, I ached so—in my breast—I ached so—and my voice wouldn't come—not for days. My throat seemed paralyzed. I don't understand—but when that wonderful thing opens up to you, and you just glimpse it, and it floods you—and then is as quickly shut out—well, you don't get over it, Joey. Something is paralyzed."

"Is that clear?" he asked anxiously.

"Clear."

"I had listened to you, Joey. I'm not blaming you. That was the only answer you could get, and I hadn't waked into life then. I was wholly in a dream, I tell you. And I had gone

to the hotel to find the heiress—as you planned—in a sort of a dream. And then I found this miracle of love—and I waked up. From a lifetime of dreaming, Joey, I waked up—and then—I lost her—and I went mad. I'm sure I was quite mad."

"Joey may not be able to believe that. Is it reasonable?"

"I believe it," she whispered. "Go on."

He sighed deeply.

"But I was not mad so far as the trenches were concerned. And all the time, Joey, I had one pure, high torch still in the world, something to cling to, definitely to fight for. And then—God, Joey, this light went out!"

He seemed choking, but he took it up and pushed on with it.

"I wish it had not. I wish I might have gone on—to death—lighted by that torch, but— It's hard to tell you this, Joey, only you must get it. You see, I loved so worshipfully. The wonder of it was all about—even in the trenches—like moonlight on prairie grass. In the worst of moments it stayed—a pure, high light."

"Then, all at once, without warning—out there in the wet—the scales fell from my eyes, and I saw her differently. I saw that she, too, was poisoned by the money madness. For in that supreme moment, Joey, when love had just unfolded, as exquisite a thing as a flower—more, more exquisite; there is nothing in human experience with which to compare it—in that divine moment that surely never visits a mortal but once, she could pause to weigh and measure, to test and try out. Joey, it was as if she stood looking through glory gates of eternity into dazzling beauty and paused to ask, before entering, 'Is there dust on my shroud?'"

There was a low moan, a soft crumpling sound. The head nurse came hurrying.

"Wait, lieutenant. Your letter writer has fainted. They work hard, the letter writers."

To the coast of Normandy, where the sea is very blue and has at times a ruffy edge not unlike that of Lake Michigan which Wesley had never been able to paint, where women in groups knitted and gossiped, or mended nets with a secret fear ever at their hearts, and funnily dressed babies wobbled fatly over the stones, came one Sabbath morning two Americans—an army officer in khaki and a slim, golden-haired nurse in white. But it was apparently not the picturesqueness of Normandy alone that had drawn them to this coast, for they paid small attention to the picturesqueness of Normandy.

There had been so much to talk about, and she had had so much to tell him. Yet, in the glare of the reddened scenes they had so recently left,

it seemed, after all, very small and unimportant.

"And so," he repeated musingly, rehearsing it all as they strolled along the beach together, "your fortune is gone—gone to the kaiser. And he has gone——"

He broke off. That Herr Schorer had taken his own life when his activities in Germany's behalf had been fully apprehended by the American Government was natural, quite the German thing to do.

"And I have nothing," she added, in the same musing tone.

"Nothing?" He turned to her quickly, youthfully accusing.

"Everything!" She changed it, and her own face filled instantly with the joyousness of youth and hope, forever irrepressible.

Bells from an old church rang out.

"Come," he said, offering his hand, and gayly they turned their steps toward its welcoming door.



"OPENED BY CENSOR"

I WONDER if the censor reads
Each page? If not, which one he skips?
For on that page, I'd like to say
How much a certain person needs
To feel, as on that last, last day,
Again, your arms, your lips.

I wonder if the censor wearies
Before a letter's done, and turns
A page unread? If I could know
Which page! For there, amid the queries
Of how your sweater fits, there'd go
A word—for which a soldier yearns.

But since I cannot surely guess
Which page his eyes will never touch,
Of all the casual lines I've sent,
Which line he'll skip through weariness,
I fear that I must be content
To say, "I miss you very much."

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

The GREAT C.P.



by
ELIZA KENT

Author of "Foghorn and Flute," "Sweet Peas," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

A bored young heiress takes a little flyer as "The Cashier in Black."

WHEN you consider that Sara, the maid, had a face like a miniature pumpkin, and Betty, the mistress, a face that borrowed from both the lily and the rose—yea, and from the violet, too—you will probably think that it is always so, and that poverty and homeliness, beauty and wealth, go hand in hand. But look behind the counters on Broadway, push ajar the gilded doors of Riverside Drive, and you will quickly change your mind. This was an exception; that's all.

As Sara brushed Betty's hair, golden as the pollen of the lily, Betty pondered the social ladder of life. Why, she wondered, did all scramble for the top rung—she was on the top rung, you know—instead of being satisfied with the rung upon which Fate had put them? Presently she spoke.

"Sara," she said, "you are a fortunate girl, though you don't realize it." Betty, being seventeen and the daughter of a grain king, of course possessed superior knowledge. "But I do wish

you would quit imitating me and be your natural self. Remember that I will be married for my money, and there's nothing more dismal to contemplate. So my position in life is not worth envying. Now, you belong to the great common people, whom I once heard a lecturer call the 'salt of the earth.' I would give half of my fortune"—she meant her father's fortune—"to be able to mingle with the common people and marry a man who didn't know I was rich."

Blessed Betty! She believed it. As to Sara, she would hilariously have exchanged places with her mistress for considerably less, but she lacked the courage to announce it.

"I was going to say," continued Betty, "that if you will write me a list of the expressions, commonly called 'slang,' used by your friends, I will give you the old pink silk I was going to send to the Belgian orphans."

Sara, with the assistance of the milkman and the dancing teacher who clerked at the corner grocery, and the

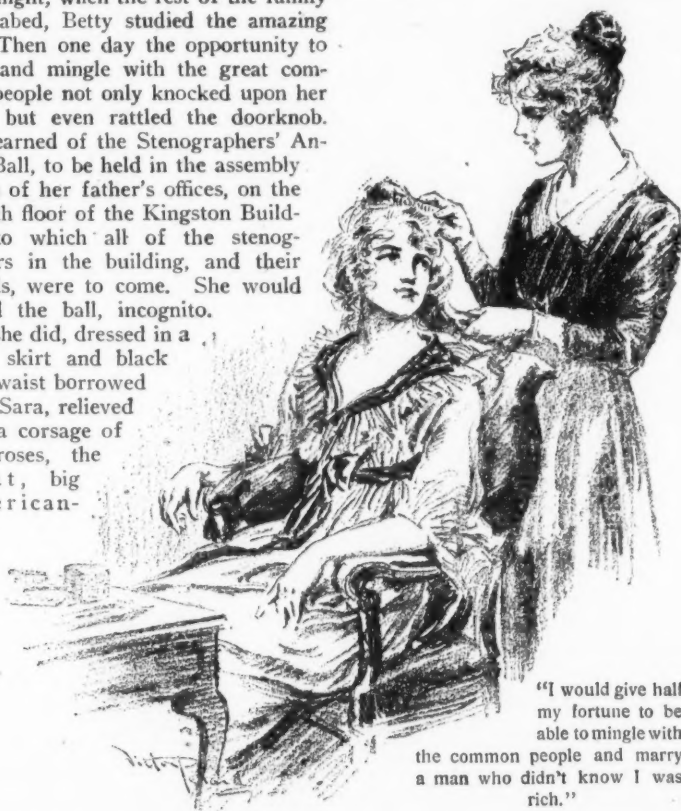
actor friend of the dancing teacher, promptly came into possession of the wonderful pink silk, and Betty came into possession of a list of slangy expressions that exceeded in wonder even the wonderful pink silk.

At night, when the rest of the family were abed, Betty studied the amazing list. Then one day the opportunity to meet and mingle with the great common people not only knocked upon her door, but even rattled the doorknob. She learned of the Stenographers' Annual Ball, to be held in the assembly rooms of her father's offices, on the seventh floor of the Kingston Building, to which all of the stenographers in the building, and their friends, were to come. She would attend the ball, incognito.

And she did, dressed in a black skirt and black shirt waist borrowed from Sara, relieved with a corsage of red roses, the great, big American-

capable, clear-eyed, impersonal young woman, enveloped in whirling billows of April-green silk, who looked more like a ward of John D.'s than a stenographer—at least, so Betty thought.

"My name is Betty King," our



"I would give half my fortune to be able to mingle with the common people and marry a man who didn't know I was rich."

beauty kind that cost—well, no matter what they cost, for Betty would never see the bill.

"Gee," she said to the first girl she met in the little improvised dressing room, "ain't it swell?"

"It's quite splendid," replied the girl, with a cool stare.

This particular young lady was a

heroine continued, "and I'm a stranger. Wish you'd introduce me to some of the guys out there."

The stenographer, after recovering from a very sudden and very severe attack of coughing, graciously agreed to do so.

Betty felt a solemn sense of timidity and awe as she advanced toward this

little group of the great common people, and she was surprised, upon a closer view, to find that they looked as familiar as her own face in the glass.

"Here is a young lady I met in the dressing room," said the young lady in green, "Miss Betty King, who says she is a stranger here."

The introductions went round the circle exactly as they would have in Betty's own drawing-room, coolly polite. It was all no doubt very democratic, yet the great common people were not overly cordial. But then, perhaps, when one came really to know them—

Yet there was one who fell into her arms, figuratively speaking—a certain John Brown, who was dressed as her father's chauffeur dressed when he was working in the garage, being clad in buff-colored trousers and a blue shirt, slightly open at the neck. His form was like that of a young god, straight and fine and strong, and he followed Betty around like a pet dog.

"Gee, this is some crowd!" he said.

"Ain't it, though?" replied Betty, happy to find in him a true disciple of her ideal. "You're not a stenographer, are you?"

"You've guessed right," he replied. "Guess again and tell me what I am."

"A blacksmith," she said. "I can tell it from your finely developed arms."

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Go to the head of your class, for a blacksmith I be."

They danced beautifully together, and of all the room John Brown was the only candle whose light was not hidden under a bushel of pretense. She was sure the others were using language and mannerisms far above their station, and every time she and John Brown approached a group, they scattered like leaves in a windstorm, showing quite plainly that, instead of being the great common people, they were merely a flock of mocking-birds. Perhaps, after

all, the great common people would be found leading hermits' lives. She had just read a lovely story of a hermit and a young lady lost in the woods, whom he rescued and married, but she was disgusted to remember that when they were married, they left the cave and lived in a big, big city.

"I guessed your trade; now guess mine," she said to John Brown, as they stood alone in a corner of the room, waiting for something to happen.

"You're a cashier at some restaurant," he replied promptly.

"Right-o!" gasped Betty, almost forgetting the proper word in the excitement of finding herself a mere restaurant cashier.

"You're just what I've been dreaming of," continued John Brown, "modest and not a bit discontented, you know."

"It must be glorious to be rich," replied Betty, "but then I ain't unhappy as I am. Not at all. As long as I have a job, I'm game."

"What do you get a week?" asked John Brown, writing something in a little penny-sized notebook.

A flash of inspiration suggested the amount.

"Five dollars," she said.

John Brown's face darkened.

"Five dollars!" he said, his voice hissing from between his teeth like the escape of pent-up steam. "Five dollars. O gemini! Can such things be?"

"They shouldn't be," said Betty, drowning her conscience with a sigh. "By the time one pays room and boarding and street-car fare and—and laundry bills, and dresses one's self, there ain't much left, and one gets dog-weary."

"Five dollars! O gemini!"

The young blacksmith looked so stern that Betty trembled in her little French kid pumps, which she had forgotten to change for coarser ones, and she could



Basil Carlyle pressed the drooping red rose against his lips.

think of nothing to say but "Ain't it awful?"

"And yet," he declared passionately, making another entry in his little penny-sized notebook, "your form is as beautiful as the most exalted, your eyes are as blue, your skin is as fair, the gold of your hair is as untarnished, your soul is as pure—and all on five dollars!"

Betty began to be stirred with a delicious terror. What if this young

Lochinvar should actually fall in love with her? What would mother say to buff-colored trousers and a blue shirt as a ballroom dress? The thought was too tragical for consideration. In the reaction, she suddenly realized that she had danced with no one but John Brown, and John Brown had danced with no one but her, and though she had a sudden, wild impulse to dare fate still further, yet her mother's training

gained the day. She suggested that he find her another partner for the next dance.

John Brown went forth to do her bidding and at last brought back a young man whom she found both affected and tiresome, for he wore the conventional evening suit and used conventional English. He was plainly aping the dress and ways and words of others. Not once did he observe that anything was "swell" or "awful," and not once did he use that pet contraction "ain't." In fact, his overpolite, half-bored manner wearied her.

She longed for John Brown, and was thrilled to observe that he was sitting out that number and that his eyes were upon her at every bend of the dance. Presently a new thrill seized her—when it was time for her to leave, what if he should insist upon accompanying her home, as lowly lovers always did? She decided she would do as the beloved Cinderella had done—slip away from the dressing room, unknown to all, before the clock struck twelve. Remembering that Cinderella had dropped her little slipper for the prince, she left with the elevator boy a red rose for John Brown.

The next day, when she tried to locate her prince charming in the telephone directory, she found that there were fifty-seven varieties of John Browns in the city, thirteen being blacksmiths, and there was no possible way of distinguishing her particular J. B.

"Betty, what on earth possesses you to-day?" her mother asked that evening just before going down to dinner. "You're as listless as a snail, and Basil Carlyle to be our guest for dinner!"

"Piffle!" said Betty, borrowing a word from the wonderful list. "It makes me tired to have to meet some one just because he happens to be immensely rich. You'll probably be want-

ing me to marry him next. I get so tired of rich people!"

Betty had a wise, wise mother. She was careful to show no surprise at this unusual speech.

"Like him or not, my dear," she said, "that's just as you please. But for Heaven's sake, stop sighing."

"You'd sigh, too," sighed Betty again, "if your light were hid under a bushel."

"My light! What light?"

"The light of my individuality," wailed Betty. "It's hidden under a burden of wealth, like a candle under a bushel!"

A moment later, she silently followed her mother downstairs.

"Mr. Basil Carlyle," came her mother's soft voice.

Betty looked up—and blushed. It's a way girls have. Then she bowed coldly and walked hastily over to the piano, supposedly in search of a certain kind of rose, leaving Basil Carlyle biting the end of an imaginary mustache. Suddenly her face brightened wonderfully and she deserted the piano.

"Were you seeking the great common people, too?" she demanded breathlessly of Basil Carlyle.

"Sure," he said, taking from his upper left vest pocket a drooping red rose. "I suppose that's what you'd call 'em. You see, I want to be a war correspondent, and the editor says I must first learn to write up local color, and so I'm practicing, you know. But I've got one on him. He's promised to print my article on 'The Cashier in Black,' because, he says, I've caught the local color in it." And Basil Carlyle pressed the drooping red rose against his lips.

Betty blushed adorably, and as the dinner gong sounded, put the tips of her pretty fingers on the arm of Basil Carlyle, alias John Brown, and led the way to the dining room.



ALLYN in LOVE

by

WINONA GODFREY
Author of

"One of Gilly's Ideas," "The Beholder of Beauty," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

Another of the charming Gilly and Allyn stories. Perhaps you remember that perfectly good idea of Gilly's that worked out with such unexpected results.

GILLY and I were sitting with a nice grate fire. I say "with" advisedly, because a merry little fire is like another and most companionable friend. A fog, white and mysterious, pressed around our Russian Hill apartment, and the siren on Alcatraz "who-who-ed" at the ferryboat ghosts. Our new orange-Persian kitten, "Sinbad," luxuriated on an old-rose pillow.

You know I met Gilberta Dodd at the Art Institute, and we've been pals ever since. Gilly is a darling—a genius with sand in her carburetor or whatever it is that makes an engine miss fire. Yes, Gilly is a bird all poised for flight—that never quite gets on the wing. We are really *very* fond of each other.

"These people," said Gilly, throwing down the evening paper, "who write articles trying to argue other people into marriage make me laugh."

"You're lucky, Gilly," I returned languidly from the couch. "As a rule, they only make me sniff."

"As if," continued Gilly, with a touch

of scorn for human misconceptions, "there was something *voluntary* about the average marriage!"

I turned my head.

"Really, Gilly, you alarm me! I've always hoped that it would be entirely voluntary with me."

"Marriage," Gilly contended firmly, "isn't a thing that you do or don't do—it's a thing that happens to you, like being caught in a shower or falling downstairs."

"Your illustrations are not exactly encouraging," I said. "Pleasant things happen occasionally. Didn't Sinbad, here, happen to us quite unexpectedly last week?"

"Exactly!" exclaimed Gilly triumphantly. "I saw Sinbad and could not resist him. I don't approve of kittens in apartment houses, and we really need a twenty-dollar kitten rather less than some other things. But I just couldn't resist him! And Fate may give you a husband as unexpectedly next week."

"Fate would have to run fast to

give me a husband I didn't voluntarily accept," I insisted. "And it doesn't seem sporting to me to blame poor old Fate for everything. Human fatheadedness has something to do with most of our bumps, you know."

"Of course," said Gilly thoughtfully, "I suppose you could have voluntarily married Anthony Leonard, Allyn. But still you didn't! Maybe you just thought you could and—Fate—something—stopped you."

"How romantic!" I sighed, and the kitten yawned.

I think of Anthony Leonard with decidedly mixed emotions. In a rebellious moment, I had decided that the thing for Allyn Terry, aged twenty-five, commercial artist with the firm of Swain & Kimball, to do was to exchange her weekly forty dollars and an occasionally irksome freedom for a nice, kind husband with a beautiful bank account. No sooner had I made this decision than a suspiciously obliging little tin god opened the office door and almost literally handed me Mr. Anthony Dedham Leonard. He was rich, he was handsome, he was young, not inhumanly virtuous nor appallingly vicious, in short a marvelous catch, it seemed, for the aforesaid unimportant Allyn Terry.

A brief engagement full of teas, dinners, and motor cars, a foretaste of all the luxuries that would be mine as Mrs. Leonard, and then, one day, I found that I simply couldn't do it! I went back to work—quite a bit wiser and not really appreciably sadder. Of course I could not prove that Gilly's idea of Fate had had no hand in it, but my action still seemed entirely voluntary to me.

I glanced at Gilly, but she had forgotten marriage, was down on the rug and highly amusing herself and the kitten by poking her finger at him while he advanced upon her in stiff-legged, sidewise little jumps of mock ferocity.

When I went to work the next morning, I found that the pending change in the firm of Swain & Kimball had taken place, and that I was now an employee of the L. B. Girard Company. During the negotiations, I had not chanced to catch a glimpse of the new proprietor, so when it came my turn for the introductory interview he was favoring us all with, I entered to him with a natural curiosity—but no misgivings.

There was something oddly familiar in the figure at the desk—a much younger man than I had expected to see. He rose and took a step toward me, holding out his hand.

"Miss Terry," he began pleasantly, "I hope——"

He stopped. The recognition, I could see, was mutual.

I remembered the Sunday I had sat with Anthony on the garlanded veranda of that picturesque inn; I remembered lifting my eyes as Anthony's hand reached across the table to mine, and meeting for a second the same eyes I saw now! I had wondered, momentarily, when he had left his near-by table rather precipitately, if he had overheard that pregnant conversation. His face had some way risen in my mind a time or so since, and here he was—Landry B. Girard!

But we covered that recognition instantly and instinctively, and went on talking business in a friendly, impersonal way. Yet when I had closed his door behind me, I knew that I could never be again unconscious or unthinking of his presence there.

Something had happened to me.

Now I am twenty-five years old and I haven't lived what some people are pleased to call the sheltered life. I'm not ignorant either of myself or of the ways of this intricate and enigmatic world. I've listened to a good many words of love—some sincere, some mere philandering. I've thought I loved a man well enough to marry him



"Marriage," Gilly contended firmly, "isn't a thing that you do or don't do—it's a thing that happens to you, like being caught in a shower or falling downstairs."

—and found I didn't. I've thought I could marry a man without love—that was Anthony—and found I couldn't.

Once a man said to me: "You've never been in love."

"Lots of times," I laughed cheerfully.

"In—love?" he repeated.

And I said, "Oh, well, that's different."

So if you want to read of some fic-

tional little maid who knows not what love means, whose lips have never been kissed, perhaps you won't be interested—or only scornfully so—in Allyn Terry, just a woman; just an everyday woman, who has not managed to be wholly unmoved by all men save the right one; just a very human sort of person, trying to do the right thing without getting sanctimonious about it, and being maybe more tolerant than

she should through coming to understand how frail and wistful are all our hearts. And, being just a woman, I had been made sometimes a little scornful of the ways of love, and I had wondered, as every woman does, whether love would ever come to me a magical thing, truer and tenderer—

Oh, I won't say that I knew at once what had happened to me. Some weeks passed in which I worked just as usual, not realizing that I was quieter outside and in. I didn't see Landry Girard often. When I did, he was pleasantly courteous as to everybody.

I have always been promising myself to paint a serious picture, or perhaps I should say paint a picture seriously. One Sunday I got out my old drawing board and started making some sketches.

"Gilly," I observed, "I feel a masterpiece coming on. You know, I've always said some day I would. I think I'll start with a portrait of you and Sinbad. Will you sit for me?"

"Of course," said Gilly. "But I don't know how long Sinbad will sit. You'll have to catch him on the wing."

My gaze strayed from the easel to the open window, out upon the blue bay of San Francisco. No definite wish possessed me; I was conscious of no reaching dream—not even of Gilly's affectionate eyes, until she spoke:

"Allyn—"

I looked at her.

"Yes?"

"Allyn"—her voice held a new inflection—"Allyn, I do believe you're—in love!"

I have a gay little guard who keeps watch at the drawbridge of my inner castle. I've tried to train him well, and now he ran valiantly forward.

"Gilly! Do you suppose it's only that? And I thought it was an artistic inspiration! You know I've always said, if I could only stay in love long enough, I'm sure I could become a great artist!"

Gilly's caressing fingers touched my hair.

"You're not regretting Anthony, dear?"

"Gilberta Dodd, you've been reading something sugary! Or is it that crab you and the professor were eating so late last night? I assure you I'm pining only for my dinner."

The blessed telephone rang. As I flew to answer it, I caught sight of my face in a mirror—*blushing*.

When I was alone, I looked my inner self sternly in the eye, so to speak.

"You're discovered, Allyn Terry! Now, you *buck up* and behave yourself! Fresh air and exercise, and, mind, no mooning! Don't," I begged myself, "go to taking yourself seriously! You're so precious fond of your sense of humor—now apply it to yourself. Isn't there something beautifully humorous in Allyn Terry thinking this way about a man who associates her with the office furniture?"

It was really *very* funny—heart-breakingly so.

I assured myself that I had been attracted by men before, and nothing serious had come of it. There was just something about Landry Girard that interested me, drew me, held me. Nonsense! I'd forget about it next week. "Take shame to yourself, Allyn!" as my old Aunt Kate used to say. This could not be love. Love is a thing based on congenial tastes, sympathy, companionship. Why, I really did not know Landry at all! So how could I love him?

Once or twice he called me in to discuss some designs, occasionally I met him about the offices—that was all. For some reason I did not look at him. Then one night I came down to the street just as he was driving—no, being driven—away in an ultra-smart motor car by an ultra-smart girl, who was frankly what Gilly vulgarly calls "giving him the eye."

The sight stabbed me—and made me furious with self-scorn. I was amazed that I could be so stabbed. I was frightened by the bitter pain of it.

I was very merry with Gilly at home that night and romped wildly with Sinbad, but when my light was out, when at last I was alone, tears—oh, in spite of all my sense of humor!—tears burned up in my eyes.

It's always been my creed to face things. It seems so foolish to pretend not to see, to avoid facing the truth till the last minute. And so now I put my back to the wall and tried to look straight at my problem.

"Foolishly, gratuitously, but irrevocably, Allyn, you're at last in love—in love with a man who isn't even your friend in a social sense. What are you going to do about it?"

"What is there to do?" wailed the weaker half of me. "Now you're being punished for scoffing at love—at unrequited love. You've always gone about looking at love with such an amused superiority. Now you feel it yourself! It doesn't seem so funny—or so manageable—does it? And just what do you think you'll do about it?"

I set my teeth.

"Can you imagine yourself, Allyn dear, as a blighted being? Can you imagine yourself pining o' nights, getting thin, letting a green-and-yellow melancholy prey on your damask cheek in the stereotyped way? Call yourself a fool, if you like, but come, face it! Yes, that was a tear that plunked upon your hot pillow."

"I won't, won't, won't cry!" I sobbed. "I'll get him or forget him! I will, I will, I will!"

Get him! The woman chooses and pursues, thinks Mr. Shaw. But how? Throw myself in his way? Look languishingly? There are many tawdry ways. The very thought of them sickened me.

Forget him, then? I had once

thought I might say come or go to love! Then, what remains? Out of memory, a line leaped to me:

And what remains? Oh, be undaunted—I could certainly try my luck at being that.

I did not, I confess, sleep any too well, but I rose valiantly with a song upon my lips:

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?

Prithee, why so pale?

Will, when looking well can't move her,

Looking ill prevail?

The day held a surprise for me. During my lunch hour, I met Landry Girard and Anthony Leonard walking together. I bowed, smiling. Two hats came off; Anthony's eyes sought mine. I wondered how old or how new that acquaintance was.

At five o'clock, when I left the elevator, Anthony was waiting for me. I had not talked with him twice since we had remedied the mistake of our engagement. I did not wish to talk to him now.

"My car's outside," he said. "Let me take you home."

"No, thank you, Anthony."

"I have something to say to you," he insisted, in the way I remembered so well.

"Important?" I fenced.

"Very."

"Can't you tell me here?"

"Of course not. Be kind, Allyn."

I yielded with a shrug, and a moment later sank back in that wonderful car of his as I had used to do so often. I could not forbear a quizzical glance at him.

"Don't you regret it just a little?" he murmured beside me.

"I regret nothing," I returned coolly.

"What have you to say to me that's so important?"

He put his hand over mine.

"What a woman you are!" he said.

I drew my hand away.



I came down to the street just as he was being driven away in an ultra-smart motor car by an ultra-smart girl. The sight stabbed me—and made me furious with self-scorn.

"Allyn, let's try again, won't you? I thought it didn't matter so much when we quit—but it does. Do you know, when I get to a hilltop and feel the sea wind in my face, it makes me think of you? It's so fine and keen and sweet and bracing—like you. And I want you back."

"Anthony, that's dear of you! I'm proud that you can think that. But—I've nothing to give you, Anthony. We tried, and it was all wrong. You know that. So what's the use?"

"You won't even try again?"

"I can't, Anthony."

He stiffened in a cross-little-boy way.

"I knew you wouldn't. That was Girard's advice."

"Girard's? What do you mean?"

"Oh—I happened to mention you one day—and we—sort of got to talking. And—well, in the course of it, he asked me why I didn't try again."

"Is Mr. Girard such an old friend that you seek his advice?"

"Oh, no. I just asked him if you seemed to be going around with any one."

"How should he know?" I asked angrily.

"Well, he sees you every day. I don't see why you should get so huffed about it."

"I prefer that you shouldn't discuss me with Mr. Girard or any one else."

"There you go! I wasn't discussing you. It came up naturally."

"You see how it is, Anthony. We can't be together five minutes without quarreling. And I like you too well to quarrel with you."

"So stay away, I suppose you mean," he grumbled.

"And you like me so much better in retrospect, Anthony, than in person."

"I don't——" he began with a hint of ardor.

I was glad that just then we arrived.

I fancied there was a question in Landry's eyes when he said good morning. I made certain there was no answer in mine. Late in the afternoon, he sent for me to discuss some special work I was to do. We finished that and drifted into talk of other things. Suddenly, apropos of nothing, he branched off:

"Do you remember seeing me once before I came here?"

"Yes," I returned in a low voice.

"It was at Woodside," he went on slowly. "You were dining there with Anthony Leonard."

I nodded. I didn't know what to make of that.

"I assure you I was never so interested before in a conversation that I could not hear." He laughed a little.

"Why?" I heard myself ask.

"Because I——" He stopped. An eagerness that had been growing in his strong face went out like a quenched flame. "I knew who Leonard was, something about him. I had heard—may I say it?—of his engagement to you. But I had not seen you before, and you—interested me."

"Oh, thank you," I said lightly.

There was a pause.

"You saw him last night?" he asked slowly.

"Why—yes."

"Is it—all right again?"

"Mr. Girard, really——"

"I beg your pardon. I'm taking an unwarrantable liberty. Forgive me, Miss Terry, please."

I didn't dare look at him, much as I longed to know whether this strange interest was altogether in Anthony.

"Oh, you're entirely forgiven," I said, still in that carefully light tone. "And if you really want to know, I'll tell you that everything is quite all right."

"You mean—that you're going to marry Leonard soon?"

"No, I mean that I'm not going to marry him at all."

My eyes, evading his, fell upon his clock—with amazement and horror. It was six o'clock!

"Your clock!" I gasped, springing to my feet. "It can't be right, surely!"

I flew to the door. The outer offices were empty! For an hour we had been sitting there oblivious of the departing office force, oblivious of all the world! And I was so conscious of my own guilt! Time had ceased to exist for me, I had been so happy in the company of the man I loved. Just to be sitting there with him in the first intimation of something a little personal between us—— What must he think of me? I was furious with this sentimental Allyn Terry. He followed me with half-laughing apologies as I fled for my wraps, and I replied flipantly.

We came out upon the street, and there at the curb, in her ultra-smart car, sat that ultra-smart girl of the other night.

"Landry!" she called with a not-too-reproachful pout. "I've been waiting simply hours! I thought I'd stop by for

you as long as you were dining with us." She gave me a glance variously compounded of curiosity, appraisal, dislike.

"Oh—Ada——" Landry hesitated for his next word. In that second I solved his problem.

"Good night," I said, and walked rapidly away. Probably, though, he had had no problem. I wondered if "Ada" would give him a bad half hour. Also, being most human, as I have confessed, I wondered what men see in these snippy little blondes.

Gilly exclaimed at my tardiness, which I explained by saying that Mr. Girard and I had been talking business.

"The business of what?" asked Gilly in her straight-from-the-shoulder way.

"The business of what? Don't be silly, Gilly! Just business."

"I thought maybe it was the business of life," said Gilly. It seems perfectly useless to try to have any secrets from Gilly.

In the course of the next morning, Mr. Girard paused at my side.

"Good morning, Miss Terry."

"Good morning, Mr. Girard."

"Get home all right?" he queried lightly.

"Oh, quite all right. And you?"

Even if I was not looking at him, I could see him getting red in the face. Then he coughed back a laugh.

"You're most impertinent," he said in an undertone and went on, grinning a little sheepishly.

Gilly went out with the professor that evening, and Sinbad and I were left alone with our thoughts—which is where kittens probably have the best of us.

I picked up a book Gilly had left on the window seat. It was one of these sad stories of unrequited love. If the heroine had wailed and sniffled through half a volume, I would have been full of derision, but this girl was such a *trump*, she was so *dead*.

that the first thing I knew I had a lump in my throat and was feeling for my handkerchief. While I was wiping my eyes, the kitten yawned prodigiously and winked at me solemnly with one round amber eye. That made me laugh, and just then the telephone bell rang.

"Hello!" I answered carelessly.

"Hello! Miss Terry?"

I could hardly believe my ears.

"Yes, Mr. Girard."

"Thanks for recognizing my musical voice. Oh—ah—Miss Terry, are you going to be at home this evening?"

"Yes."

"May I—I wonder if you'd let me run out a little while?"

"I should be delighted," I returned, coolly sweet. How lucky that telephones don't register the beating of hearts!

"Thank you. I'll be right out, then. You see, I've an offer for the business, and I want to—I want your advice."

I wondered if "Ada" insisted on his removing himself from certain possible influences. Well, he was there almost by the time I'd powdered my nose. He seemed to bring some of the fresh wind in with him. Oh, he was a *man*, my man!

After he had remarked how cozy we were and had tickled Sinbad's chin and admired his ruff, Landry noticed my book. I said I liked it because the heroine, though seriously in love, refused to pine.

"People in love—in books—usually act so absurd."

"Also out of books," said he. "Perhaps you know how people in love ought to act."

"Oh, certainly. It's always easy to know how people *ought* to act."

"If that's the case, I'd like to hear your comments on the case of a man I know. Would you care to hear the story?"



"Your clock!" I gasped, springing to my feet.

"It can't be right, surely!"

I assured him that I was dying to hear it.

Sinbad stretched out on his cushion, purring blissfully at the fire.

"Well, this chap," Landry began in a low voice, looking into the fire, too, "was dining out in the country one day and—saw a man he knew of with a girl. And this girl was a wonderful looking girl—something more than just beautiful, and—this chap—kept thinking of her after that—every day—and night. He knew she was engaged to

the man she was with, he didn't know a thing about her disposition, he called himself a fool—but he couldn't help thinking of her—all the time—as the One Woman."

He paused, and Sinbad's pur rose harmoniously. I sat on the divan with my face turned from the teller of this enchanting tale.

"Then he became acquainted with the man and learned that he wasn't engaged to the girl any more. And this chap, being a lucky fellow about money,

went and bought out the business where this girl worked, so he could meet her and be—near her. But she—some way she always seemed so on her guard with him—I—he couldn't understand why. She wouldn't give him a chance. He couldn't some way get started. And he worried because he thought maybe she still cared for the other fellow. He just had to find out—and—and he found out she didn't." He drew a long breath of relief and looked at me for the first time. I could feel him doing it. "You—maybe this doesn't interest you?"

"Oh, yes." My voice sounded a mere wisp. "It does—very much."

He brightened.

"You, being a woman, must know something about women. What would you advise this chap to do? Only, it's no use telling him to stop, because he couldn't stop."

The tenderness of his look and tone enveloped me like a caress.

"It seems a very difficult case," I said carefully, wanting to cry—women are such idiots!—so I laughed. "And awfully funny!"

"Funny!"

"Yes. Think of two absurd people going about for months acting like that—"

"Two people?" He was over sitting on the divan beside me. "Allyn—what a darling name that is!—what do you mean by *two* people, Allyn, Allyn?"

"It was a slip of the tongue, Landry."

"Allyn, will you marry me?"

"I—can't possibly know in the first chapter."

"This is way in the middle of the book." He had both my hands. "Let's skip over to the last page."

"What does it say?" I whispered.

"She said yes, and he—kissed her," he answered, trembling.

When Gilly and the professor came home, my caller was still there. Gilly was almost taken aback by the affectionateness of his greeting to her. And he was a long time saying good night to me. I came in singing—I couldn't help it—

*"Je vous aime de tout mon cœur,
Tout les jours vingt-quatre heures!"*

Gilly seized my hand.

"So that was it!" she murmured mischievously. "What did I say about Fate and unexpected husbands?"

"Ah, but this one, Gilly, isn't happening to me in spite of myself."

"Are you sure?" said Gilly sagely.



LAUGHING EYES

YOUR eyes are merry, limpid lakes
Deep-fringed with lashes long,
And at their glance my soul awakes,
My lips are tuned to song.
Your eyes, their depths I joy to see,
Yet only time shall prove
If they are laughing now with me
Or laughing at my love.

L. M. THORNTON.





NEW YORK STAGE SUCCESSSES

Going Up

A Musical Comedy Based on James Montgomery's play, "The Aviator"

Book by Otto Harbach

Music by Lou Hirsch



Frank Craven in the leading rôle.

IF you visit the Berkshires, you will search in vain for the Gordon Inn. It is there, however, under another name, one of the most expensive and by all odds the most comfortable and prettiest of places to stay. Lots of people stay there all summer, instead of going from place to place in motor cars, as has been the growing custom of recent years. There is always something doing at the Gordon Inn. John Gordon, the proprietor, is such a confirmed better and sporting man that his wagers in themselves are a topic of interest—and then there are always interesting people at the inn. This year, toward the close of the season, the great sensation was Robert Street, the well-known author. He drove up to the inn quietly enough, in a modest yellow sixty-horse-power automobile. He had one friend with him, Hopkinson Brown.

Street engaged a beautiful suite in the hotel and proceeded to occupy it. He seemed to be rather shy in disposi-

tion and desirous of meeting as few new people as possible.

Hopkinson Brown, however, a young man of engaging appearance and affable manners, was of another frame of mind. Within a day, he knew every girl in the inn. Within two days, he was particularly well acquainted with Madeline Manners, who seemed to him to exemplify excellently, in her own person, Tennyson's conception, "queen of the rosebud garden of girls."

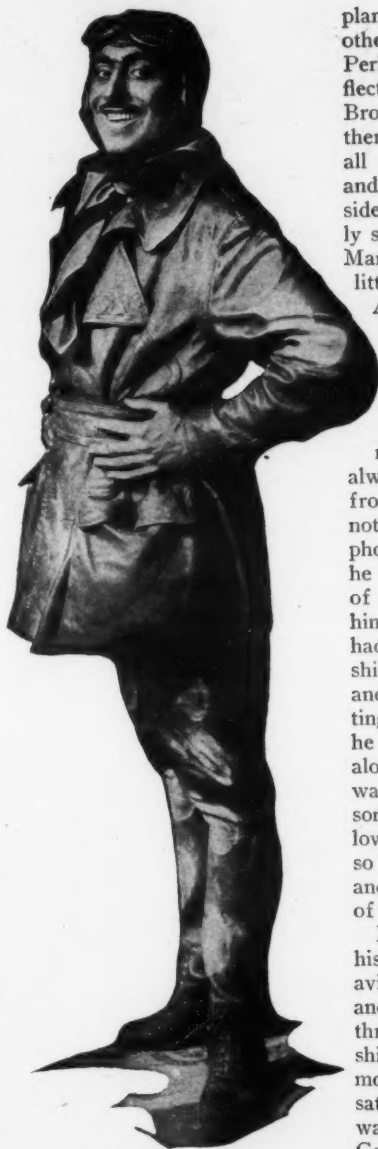
The enterprising Hopkinson soon discovered that, while he was interesting in himself, he was doubly interesting as the friend of the mysterious Mr. Street. He found that when he talked of Street, he was sure of a lovely and attentive audience. Appreciating such things in the pleasant autumn weather, he proceeded to talk about Street extensively. Indeed, had he been a paid press agent instead of a friend of Street's, it is doubtful if he could have directed more attention to the author and his works.

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Mr. Street was a wonderful man. He had written a best seller. It was a wonderful book, the most remarkable of the year. It was called "Going Up." Yes, there were copies to be had at the hotel news stand. And after hearing Hopkinson talk about the book and its author, nearly every one bought a copy. The guests were reading it; the telephone girls were reading it; the elevator boys, doubly interested in it on account of the title, were reading it. You were likely to find a copy almost anywhere in the hotel.

Among the many things Street had put in his book was a thrilling description of a flight in an aeroplane. It made the reader actually feel as if he, or she, were going up in the air. Was Mr. Street an aviator? Had he actually made flights such as he described?

Carried away by his enthusiasm and the interest he provoked, Hopkinson Brown admitted that his friend Robert Street had done everything he described in the book, from making love to soaring above the clouds in an aëro-



GAILLARD: "Good morning, Miss Madeline."

plane—and a lot of other things, besides. Perhaps it was reflected glory that Brown shone in, but there was no doubt at all that he shone—and enjoyed it. Besides, he was perfectly sure that Madeline Manners liked him a little for himself.

And so he was having a perfectly lovely time.

Street himself was not enjoying it quite so much. There were always calls for him from people he did not know on the telephone. Other people he had never heard of wanted to meet him personally. He had gone to the Berkshires for seclusion, and he was not getting it. The only time he was sure of being alone was when he was out on the road somewhere in his yellow automobile, and so he became more and more a gentleman of the road.

In the meantime, his reputation as an aviator was growing, and it became known through all the Berkshires that one of the most daring and sensational of flying men was staying at the Gordon Inn. Gordon, the proprietor, became quite proud of

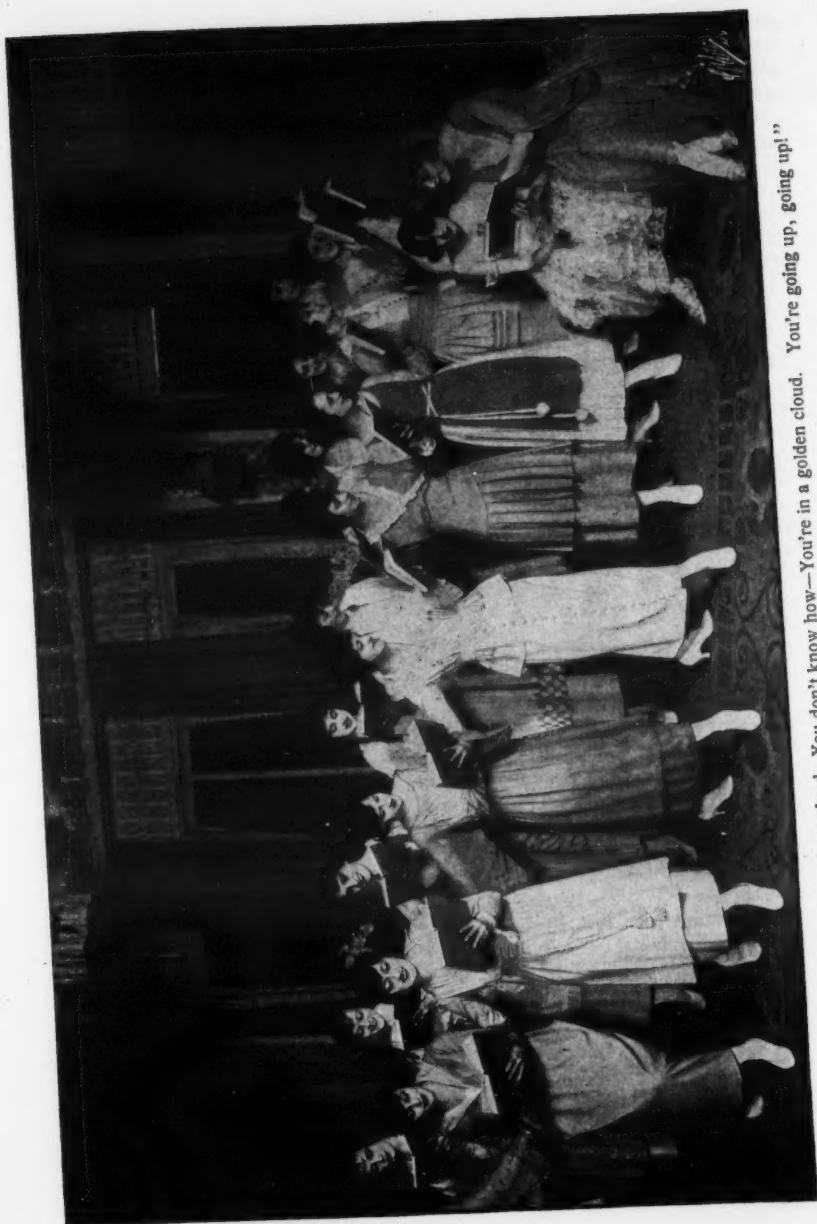


GAILLARD: "You're on the way that leads to paradise. You're going up, going up, like a rocket gone insane."

his guest and, although he had never seen him fly, was perfectly willing to back him to fly faster and farther than any one else for the honor of the house.

Perhaps the most insistent of those who want to make a closer acquaintance

with Mr. Street is a certain Mr. F. H. Douglas, who has a nice wife and a still nicer daughter, Grace. To add to his collection of nice things, Mr. Douglas is proposing to annex a certain Monsieur Gaillard as a son-in-law. Gaillard is the real thing in French avi-



CHORUS: "You want to shout aloud—You don't know how—You're in a golden cloud. You're going up, going up!"

ators. He has all the leather clothes and goggles that an aviator can possibly wear. He has two big French machines. He is attractive and dashing, and yet Grace cannot make up her mind to have him. She has been a little bit attracted by what she has heard and seen of Street.

Perhaps some feeling in regard to this prompts Douglas in his desire to get up a match between Street and Gaillard. Perhaps he feels that if he can show his daughter that Gaillard is a better aviator than Street, Grace will like the Frenchman better. At any rate, he has been hunting for Street in order to get up a match between him and Gaillard. Gaillard has kindly offered to let Street use one of his machines. He and Gordon get into an argument about Street, who is continuously missing.

DOUGLAS: I saw Street early this morning in his car, headed for New York. I'll bet he's vamoosed.

GORDON: What do you mean, vamoosed?

DOUGLAS: He'll never make a showing against Gaillard.

GORDON: He'll embroider rings about him.

DOUGLAS: Listen. I've seen Gaillard fly.

GORDON: But you haven't seen Street fly.



STREET: "Oh, you found them—so soon?"

DOUGLAS: Have you?

GORDON: No, but I've read his book. No man who isn't an expert could write a book like that.

DOUGLAS: Piffle! The greatest ode to the sunrise was written by a chap who never got up till noon.

GORDON: Well, I'll bet you one thousand dollars that Street flies higher, stays up longer, and goes farther than your Frenchman.

DOUGLAS: He may fly high, stay up long, go fast and far—but not in

an *aéroplane*, and certainly not in company with Monsieur Gaillard.

GORDON: All right. I'll bet two thousand that Street makes the Frenchman look like a stationary washtub.

Gordon breaks into a song and, assisted by the chorus, explains that he has been a better on the wrong side all his life—"a most consistent loser, a royal, rotten chooser"—but that this time he simply cannot lose.

In the meantime, Hopkinson Brown has proposed to Madeline Manners and been accepted by her. She admires Hoppy for his strong will, and tells him, in song, that she wants "a boy with a strong, strong will who will do what she tells him to do."

She tells Grace Douglas, a little later, that Hopkinson has come across, and Grace, on her part, confesses her interest in Street. She has met him a day or so previously. Her car broke down and he came along in his yellow machine and put her car to rights in a moment—a simple thing for an aviator. He has also left a pair of yellow gloves in the car and Grace, in maidenly simplicity, is waiting around to return them.

Gaillard arrives at the hotel with his machines, ready to fly, but doubtful about Street's willingness. Street has said something, it seems, about difficulty in having his machine shipped, and in the meantime is not to be found anywhere. Gaillard, asked what the sensations of the aviator are, picks up a copy of Street's book and says he has found a better description in that volume than anywhere else. Street must have put lyrics as well as prose into his best seller, for his description of a flight turns out to be a song with a lot of swing to it, which depicts the life of an airman as full of madness and thrills. "Like a rocket gone insane," is the way Street puts it.

Street finally appears himself, worried, distracted, but good-natured, tip-

ping bell boys right and left and assuring them that he is at home to no one.

STREET: Now listen. If any *aéro club*, or any Frenchman, or any one who talks as if he was interested in airships, asks for me, tell him that I have left the hotel. Tell him that I'm dead. Tell him anything.

Brooks, the publisher of his books, a hustling young business man out to pay Street a visit, arrives a moment later and inquires the cause of Street's trouble.

STREET: I'm scared to death. I'm scared of anything that hurts me. The trouble is "going up."

BROOKS: Why, the book is selling great!

STREET: That's the trouble. To begin with, all the guests here have read my book.

BROOKS: Good!

STREET: No, not good, very bad. You know in one chapter of "Going Up," I talk as if I knew all about *aéroplanes*. I know as much about an *aéroplane* as an Eskimo baby. I describe a flight. Brown told them here it was my own personal experience. I own the hotel.

BROOKS: Why didn't you tell them the truth—that you were not an aviator?

STREET: Ah! That's it! Why didn't I? I was going to, but I didn't. Brown talked me out of it. Said it would be a great lark. So I kept silent. On the level, they wanted me to be an aviator, and they asked so many questions that I was obliged to tell them about actual flights I had made. About three days ago, a romantic Frenchman showed up—a real, honest, hope-to-die aviator. He brought with him two of the most infernal wind wagons I have ever seen.

BROOKS: What a coincidence!

STREET: Is that what you call it? They want me to race with him. They induced him to lend me one of his



Street almost faints at the size of the passenger he has contracted to take up with him.

planes. To-morrow, at six o'clock, I've got to race with him in the air. And the doctor said I was to come here for my *health!*

BROOKS: Bobby, you're a bird!

STREET: That's what they think, but I'm not. I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't fly. And no one will talk about anything else. Even the elevator boys say, "Going up."

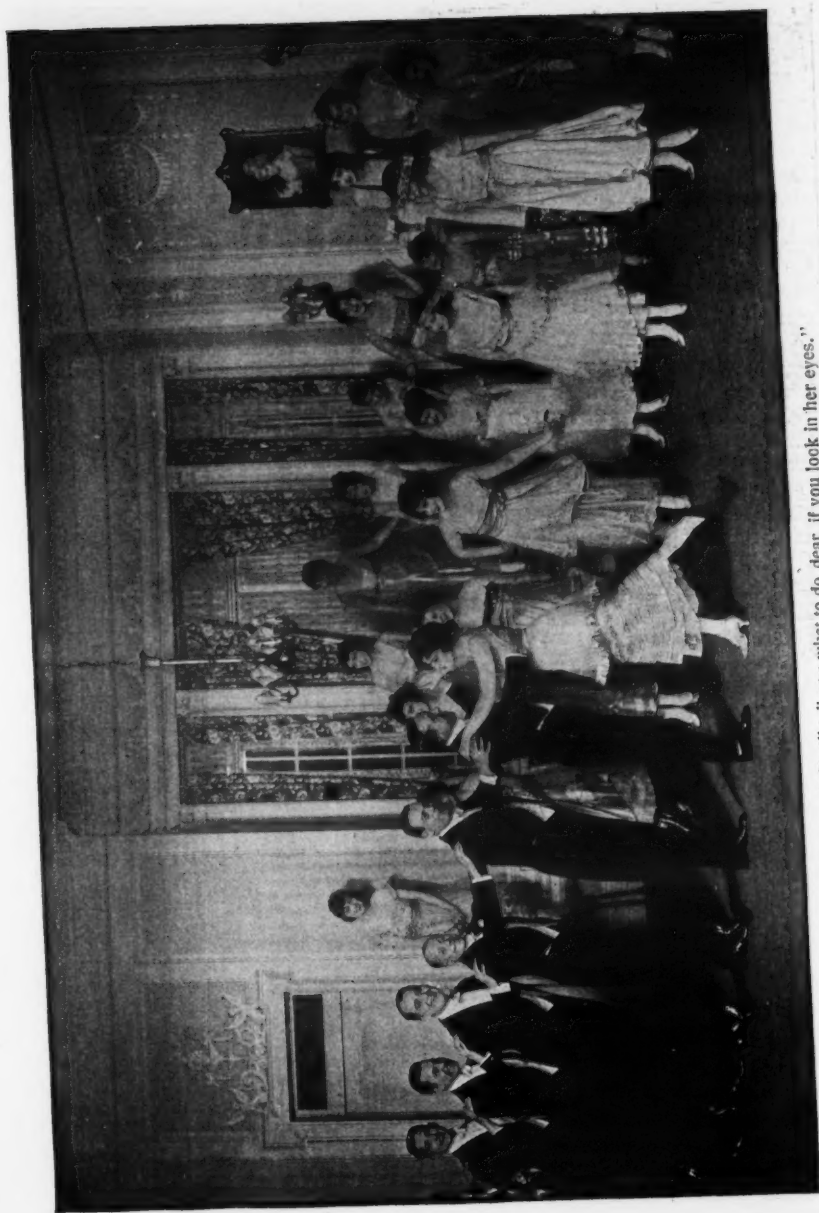
Brown and Brooks, in consultation, at first decide that there are twenty ways out of the apparently impossible situation. Finally Brown gets the idea that it will be possible for Street to make the flight, after all. There is an aéro club at Great Barrington whose mechanic, Sam Robinson, is celebrated as an expert. They can hire him to go up, ostensibly as Street's passenger, and afterward to take charge of the machine in the air. Overnight he can

teach Street enough to enable him to get the machine off the ground. Everything will be lovely. It will be a wonderful advertisement for the book. They will get the Associated Press to report the flying race and the book will sell by the tens of thousands. All Street will have to do is to cling to the floor of the machine. Brown and Brooks are enthusiastic, but the unfortunate Street is gloomier than ever.

BROOKS: It's a great idea, Bobby. We must make the flight.

STREET: *We* must make it! You mean I must make it.

For a long time Street is not to be persuaded. The disappointment of the crowd of seven thousand who are to assemble to see him fly means nothing in his life. It is only at the mention of Grace Douglas that he hesitates. When he is told how disappointed she



CHORUS: "She'll tell you what to do, dear, if you look in her eyes."



ROBINSON: "That's right. Higher—higher! Hold her there! Now you're up three thousand feet! Look out for that church steeple!"

will be, he agrees to try it with Sam Robinson, and so they telephone for Sam at his own price.

When Grace meets him to return his gloves, he is almost glad he is going up. The girl is so enthusiastic about aviators.

GRACE: Monsieur Gaillard tells me that an aviator never leaves the ground but he plays with death. Have you ever been afraid while flying?

STREET: Not while flying.

GRACE: I admire men who face danger that way. I have seen Monsieur Gaillard fly. Something tells me that you are going to win the race to-morrow.

They are interrupted by Gordon, who tells them that Street's expected pas-

senger has arrived. Gordon is strong for Street. He says that he would rather hear Street tell about his flight than see most men fly. After a lot of persuasion, the bewildered Street is induced to describe to the guests in the hotel, Monsieur Gaillard among them, his first flight in an *aéroplane*. It is a trying moment, but Street finally drops into the famous "going-up" song out of his book. He is almost happy again when Sam Robinson, the mechanic, the supposed passenger, appears with his carpet bag of tools.

One glance at honest Sam is enough to send Street's heart tumbling to his boots, for Sam is about the tallest, biggest, fattest man that the aviator has ever seen. He must tip the beam at well

up to three hundred pounds. As an aviator or passenger, he seems impossible.

The second act opens in Street's apartment, with Street, Robinson, Brooks, and Brown in consultation. Robinson says that it is possible to learn to fly in a short time.

ROBINSON: I've learned gentlemen to fly in half a day.

STREET: Where are they now?

ROBINSON: Oh, they're all right, mostly.



STREET: "I want to tell you that I love you, and that I'd do anything for you. I'd make any sacrifice. I'd give up this flight to-morrow——"

STREET: Mostly? Do you mean that parts of them are missing?

BROOKS: I sent for you, thinking you might make the flight with Mr. Street.

ROBINSON: No, you see I ain't exactly built for flying. I'm satisfied, though. I'm a married man and I can't take any chances.

BROWN: Isn't there any other member of your club that we can get to go up with him?

ROBINSON: Nope. They're all in the hospital.

BROOKS: You're giving the idea that flying is very dangerous. You don't mean that, do you?

ROBINSON (*Taking the hint and speaking in a loud, cheerful tone*): No. If I was half as light as Mr. Street, I'd be only too glad to take a little sail in one of those French machines. I'll teach him how to fly, right in this room. I don't need any machine. Give me a whole lot of chairs.

STREET: He wants to sit down.

Robinson pays no attention to this irreverent remark. He is very enthusiastic about his flying lesson, and dominates the whole scene. He perches Street on a chair on top of the table, a cane, with a straw hat on top of it, in his hands. The cane is the control, working on a universal joint. The hat is the wheel, and two visiting cards stuck in the band of the hat are the spark and the throttle. Brooks and Brown are arranged on either side, holding out their hands, representing the horizontal planes. In front is an imaginary propeller.

Robinson is so convincing in his description of these details that he carries his audience along with him. If Street wants to go up, he is to tilt the control back; if he wants to go down, he tilts it forward. To



STREET: "Wait a moment. Ladies and gentlemen—I—I—have an announcement to make—
Where do I sign?"

the right, will send him to the right; and to the left, accordingly. He gives Street a little drill in the management of the cane, the hat, and the two visiting cards. Then all is ready for a trial flight. Street moves one card to advance his spark, another to open his throttle, and Robinson, in wonderful pantomime, cranks up the imaginary propeller.

ROBINSON (*dancing about excitedly*): Now you're going over the ground! Fifty feet, one hundred feet, two hundred—

STREET: One thousand feet, five hundred feet, ten thousand—

ROBINSON: No, no! Get her in the air. Backward, backward! Now, up you go! That's right! Higher—higher! Hold her there! Now you're up three thousand feet!

STREET (*looking down over the side of the table*): My God!

ROBINSON: Look out for that church steeple.

STREET: Some church, isn't it? (*Waving at imaginary church as he swings around it*) Yea, boy!

ROBINSON: Now you're sailing along a mile a minute. Glide—glide! Now try a turn. Fine, sir! 'Way around. Bear to the high side. Great, great!

BROWN and BROOKS: Good boy, Bobby! That's fine!

ROBINSON: Down you go. Pick your landing. Down to it! Tilt her up a little. Bing! That's your wheels on the ground.

BROWN and BROOKS (*running to him and shaking hands*): Bobby, you're a wonder!

STREET: How far did I go?



STREET: "No—a man is scared while there's hope; after that he's sick."

ROBINSON :
Twenty miles, sir.
That's the greatest
trial flight I've ever
seen.

A little later,
when Robinson is
alone with Brooks
and Brown, he has
lost a great deal of
his ginger. He has
taken a liking to
Bobby and doesn't
want to see him
hurt.

ROBINSON :
You can't help liking
him, but he's the
biggest boob I ever
talked to. He'll
never learn to fly,
and he's just game
enough to go
through with it.
He'll kill himself.
Maybe I could teach
him, but he's reck-
less. He'll smash up
sure.

Brown has reason
now to be worried
on his own account.
His fiancée, Made-
line, she who wants
a boy "with a
strong, strong will,"
has insisted that
Brown make the
flight with Street.
She knows that it is
perfectly safe with
such a skillful avi-
ator as Street, and
she has announced
to the others at the
hotel that Brown is
going.

Brown is now as
anxious to prevent
Street's going up as



CHORUS: "Down! Up! Left! Right! That's what keeps her in the air. Just keep your eye on every wire and lever!"



STREET: "You stick around me and you'll learn something."

he was to have him go a little while ago. He goes to Miss Douglas and asks her to call it off. In his confusion, he gives her the impression that he thinks Gaillard is not an aviator, and she agrees with him, never dreaming that Street is not what he is said to be.

This news comes to the ears of Gaillard, who has a contract drawn and insists on Street signing it.

Brown, in desperation, makes another effort to stop the flight, which now means death for himself as well as Street. He makes another appeal to Street, but Street is determined to go up. He has just had a chat with Miss Douglas, and they have looked out over the moonlit Berkshires together and come to know each other very well indeed. In fact, Miss Douglas, who has wagered her father that Street will win and promised to marry the Frenchman if

Street loses, tells Street that she will give him his answer after the flight. She urges him to fly as he has never flown before. Street, who is head over heels in love with her by this time, promises most truthfully to do it.

So when Street and Robinson come to him, begging him not to sign the contract, they find his mind made up.

ROBINSON: Don't let him sign that paper.

BROWN: You mustn't sign it. Refuse to sign it, and I'll attend to the rest.

STREET: I've met a girl. She thinks I'm a hero. She looks on me as a human kite.

BROWN: Now, Bobby, Gaillard will be only too anxious to sign. When it comes your turn, you say, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have something to say to you. I am not an aviator." Then leave the rest to me.

Street agrees, but his resolution does not hold. When the time comes to sign before the assembled guests, he finds Miss Douglas watching him. Something in her eyes changes his mind. He starts the speech that Brown has coached him in, but it ends differently.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he says, "wait a minute. I

have something to say to you." He pauses, looks at Miss Douglas, and his mind is made up. "Where do I sign?"

At six o'clock the following evening, there is a crowd waiting to see the start of the race. Brown is in an even worse case than Street, for he feels that Madeline will force him to go up. At the



GRACE: "Promise me you'll never fly again."

STREET: "You have your wish."

last moment, Madeline relents and begs Robinson not to let him go. Robinson is still worried about Street.

ROBINSON: I've only known him twenty-four hours, but there's something about him that makes you like him. Why, sir, he didn't sleep a wink last night—never closed his eyes. He kept at it, pushing levers and asking questions, and all day to-day. I've told him all I know. The poor kid put it all down in a notebook. He's determined to make good, I guess.

Street appears, dressed to the eyes in an aviator's costume, but in an evident daze. He is stunned by the situation. He shakes hands gloomily with Madeline, Brown, and Gordon, but cheers up visibly when Grace Douglas appears. She tells him about her promise to her father, presents flags to Gaillard and Street, and the race is on. Gaillard starts first, and Street a little later. Street gets off the ground well enough, but they see him do several surprising dips as he vanishes into the air.

Presently telephone messages begin to come in. He has been seen over Hartsville at seven-thirty, and at Southfield, seven-forty-five. News comes in that Gaillard's machine has turned at Stockbridge, but that Street is still going on.

In the meantime, the conscience-stricken Brown has announced that Street is no aviator and probably doesn't know how to turn around, and there is consternation in the hotel. Douglas pursues the madly flying Street in a motor, but loses him. Gaillard returns and, learning that Street is no aviator, is greatly worried about the safety of his machine. He gets little sympathy. Every one is thinking of the ill-fated, good-natured Street, who has vanished into the darkening sky.

More bulletins are telephoned in. At Alandar, fifteen miles away, an aëroplane is seen flying north. Evidently Street has managed to turn around and is on his way back in some weird fashion. Robinson jumps up and down and leads the cheering for his pupil.

At Agrement Plain, another bulletin says, Street has been seen clearly and has been given a rousing reception. He has executed several sensational dips. Brown and Robinson shudder at the thought.

At Flat Rock, eight miles away, Street is seen executing a figure eight. The excitement has grown to tremendous tension when the news comes that Street has landed safely at Richmond at eight-thirty and is on his way to the Gordon Inn, in a motor car. He arrives almost at once and greets Gaillard nonchalantly.

STREET: What happened? Where did you go?

GAILLARD: I cannot fly in the dark.

STREET: Stick around me and you'll learn something.

BROWN: What did you come down at all for?

STREET: I came down to give a dollar I'd promised to a bell boy.

GORDON: How did you land?

STREET: The ground came up to meet me.

MADELINE: Please tell us about your flight.

But Street doesn't want to talk about flights. Grace Douglas has won the wager with her father. Gaillard, as Robinson puts it, has "lost his gal," and Grace has a request to make of her hero aviator.

GRACE: Bobby, promise me one thing.

STREET: What is it?

GRACE: Never to fly again.

STREET: You have your wish.

CURTAIN.





ILLUSTRATED BY
E. A. FURMAN

BEATRICE YORK HOUGHTON
Author of

"The Shelleys of Georgia," "The Husband of Madame Cavalietti," etc.

"I had a fight with a tigress to-day," he said. "And I won. Twice I won."

"Tell me about it, dear," she said.

"Some time," he promised.

JOHN RICK was a keeper at the zoo—a big, brawny, husky man, with stern, strong features, but with eyes as gentle as a woman's. He was different from most of the keepers in that he felt a genuine friendliness for the animals he tended. And because he loved them, he never struck them, so that the gentler of them loved him in return, while the fiercer ones eyed him malignantly, as if his tenderness and his kind voice conveyed to them a sense of weakness in him which made them contemptuous of this big man who might so easily, with stern look and stinging whip, have shown himself their master.

The tigress was fierce and untamed. Captured when almost full grown, she possessed a longing for the jungle that never lulled. She paced her prison endlessly, her eyes sleepy, yet glowing with lambent fires, her restless body each day leaner under the lash of her

desire. No one dared to enter her cage when she was loose within it. She so clearly regarded these men who brought her food and cared for her as she had looked upon those who had trapped her—enemies to be fought, to be killed, but to be conciliated—never!

John Rick felt a great sympathy for the incurable wildness of the tigress. It seemed to him a tragedy, and he respected her for her inability to yield or to forget. He loved to stand and watch her when he had the time, and he even talked to her now and then, half hoping that his gentle voice might carry her some consolation. But the conviction grew upon him that she would never be at home in her cage—would eat her very heart out and die at last of sheer homesickness unless some one among the keepers conquered her. His tender heart forbade that he should be the one to fight the beast and subdue the proud spirit that glowed

in her eyes. And so he took it out in talking to her in that gentle voice of his, so at variance with his personality, yet by which she judged him. Apparently she never heard him speak. With ears flattened against her smooth skull, she looked remotely past him. Only now and again her tail twitched slightly, and she licked her lean jaws and stretched a cushioned paw.

On Sundays John Rick was detailed to walk up and down in the narrow aisle between the cages and the iron rails that held off the curious public. The public was apt, on occasion, to get rash—to stretch arms over the rails and snap fingers at the animals to “sort of wake them up.” The bars of the cages were narrow and strong, yet lithe, tense claws could somehow dart through a little way when provocation became too great, and it was as well to take no chances. The tigress was one of those who resented the very presence of the public. With menacing growl and lashing tail, she would crouch and spring against her bars. How they laughed at the futility of her efforts, and jeered at her to make her leap again! But she soon learned to creep close to the iron rods, and wait, all aquiver with eagerness to snatch with her claws at anything coming within her reach.

One summer Sunday, as the big man was walking up and down, his heart swelling with sympathy for the imprisoned beast, he encountered the curious eyes of a girl who seemed to find him more interesting to watch than the animals. She was a pretty, tawny-haired girl, but John Rick was used to seeing pretty girls, lots of them. What caught his attention in this girl in particular was the strangeness of her eyes. He felt, as he looked into them, that he was looking into the eyes of the tigress herself. He shook himself mentally, for he was not used to imagining, yet the odd feeling would

not depart. Wild were those eyes of hers, yet sleepy; glowing, though remote; full of the same untamed fierceness that shone in the eyes of his animal prisoner; full, too, of the same undying yearning and rebellion. She returned his gaze unflinchingly, as if she scarcely knew that he was looking at her intently or didn't care in the least.

At last the girl shifted her position, half turning away. She did not seem cowed, or in any way embarrassed or coquettish, but merely completely indifferent. Following the custom of the public, she leaned over the iron rail, stretched out a long, graceful arm, so that her hand was but an inch or two from the bars of the tigress' cage, and snapped her fingers at the crouching beast. The tigress growled and lashed her tail. She was making ready. John Rick came closer.

“I wouldn't do that, if I was you,” he said. “This one is very fierce, not used yet to captivity. Her claws are sharp, and her reach is long. Even I have to watch my time to pass by the cage.”

He didn't know why he explained at such length to this girl, unless it was her eyes. His usual “Keep back there, please,” seemed inadequate.

The girl did not appear offended at his command. She smiled slowly and, reaching deliberately past the man, snapped her fingers again at the tigress. The beast gave a queer choking roar, and flung her weight against the bars. Then, realizing the impotence of that leap, again she settled herself, tense and quivering as she waited.

“I told you not to do that,” said John Rick roughly.

The girl laughed out. Her eyes, no longer sleepy, glowed with excitement.

“It's fun to watch her,” she said. “She couldn't hurt me.”

“You don't know,” answered the man sternly. “Her reach is long, and she is that quick—as quick as lightning.”

His gentle eyes had lost their gentleness in his concern for the girl. Will was in them, the will to be obeyed, the will to enforce obedience. The girl, untamed, defiant, faced him squarely. His face did not relax. And at last her eyes wavered and fell.

"Oh, well," she conceded, "I won't if you say not."

She lingered by the rail, while the

one of the big grizzlies. When at last she turned to go, he leaned toward her eagerly.

"Your name—might I ask it?" he inquired.

"Helen Marr," she answered, her eyes sleepy and indifferent as they rested upon him.

"I'm John Rick," he replied. "When will I see you again?"



"I wouldn't do that, if I was you,"
he said.

curious public came up, stared its fill, and passed on. The man found himself talking to her, telling her the short story of the tigress, and of her fierce unmanageability. As she listened with apparent pleasure, he went on to recount some of his various experiences in the zoo, and told her the somewhat long tale of a scar on his hand which was the result of an encounter with

"Oh, I don't know," she answered casually. "Maybe you'll never see me again."

It was as if the tigress had given him a little feline dig, for the girl instinctively realized his subjugation, and knew that her indifference hurt him.

She came again in a few weeks, to find him still guarding the tigress from the advances of a too-curious public.

She talked to him more, this time, quite as an old acquaintance. She told him something of herself—how her mother had died when she was little, and how she had a stepmother who didn't like her and whom she hated; how she had always done as she pleased, and yet there was so little that she pleased to do. She wanted to get away and live differently. She had an idea she might like to get into the movies, or maybe be a trained nurse. She really didn't know exactly what she did want, only that it must be different; she wanted *change*. As she gave her confidences, her eyes caressed him, and she seemed to yield entirely to his domination. Her restlessness made him all gentleness and sympathy. His hand touched hers just once upon the iron rail.

This was but the beginning, yet the rest was sufficiently like it to need no special recountal. Of this much I am certain—it was the man's stern command on that first day that roused the interest of Helen Marr, and the memory of that stern command lingered long within her breast. There was no repetition of it. John Rick, blinded by the sudden storm of love that swept over him, became this young girl's slave. He could not see how she played with him, or how every apparent concession from her was as an added link in the chain that bound him.

They married soon, and they were both very happy for a time. The gentle look in the strong man's eyes grew so pronounced that it seemed almost womanish. Helen was a perfect mate, yet it was strange that he felt sometimes as if she were akin to the tigress who glowered at him from her cage—the tigress whom no one had yet mastered. Some day he was going to master her, but not yet. He had too much sympathy with her very wildness to strike her, to cow her—yet.

Helen enjoyed beginning life anew in the tiny flat. She liked to handle

the new furniture, new dishes, and new linen. It was pleasant to plan the little dinners, to watch for and welcome this big man, and to feel her great power over him. It gave her an odd sense of triumph to see him so tremendously and overwhelmingly in love. Once in a great while she dared to try her power, just as the tigress must have let her prey feel her claws now and then while she played with it in the jungle. And as the tigress tires of her play at last, so Helen began to tire.

She grew very discontented. There were no children. She did not wish to have any children and to be tied down so young. The work in the tiny flat was not enough to occupy her time. She was not a reader or the kind that has women friends. Consequently she began to tire, and John felt the weight of her displeasure more and more often. Home was no longer heaven. It was a sort of purgatory, harboring a sulky woman who spoke constantly of wanting change. She thought she might get into the movies. She thought she *would* get into them. Why shouldn't she? He didn't make nearly as much money as a man ought to make. She was going to see the manager of a company in town. She didn't care what John wanted. She dared him to stop her.

And she went to see several managers and finally secured a contract for a small part in a rather unimportant film. It was a beginning, she boasted, as she flaunted the contract in his face. And he, most heavy-hearted, reasoned and begged and pleaded, all to no avail.

Upon the morning after the securing of that contract, Helen was more than usually intractable. Her eyes glowed more vividly with the curious lambent fire that had first attracted John's attention. It could not be said that she was actually violent, yet there was violence and untamed rebellion in the very liteness of her step, in the sulky

silence with which she slapped breakfast on the table. Mutiny held her in its lawless grasp. She was tired of her kingdom, so tired that she didn't care if she lost it. And suddenly she began to talk incessantly about the manager who had given her the contract. He was such a nice sort of fellow, and he had smiled at her—so—and had said he didn't believe she was married at all. And he had called her type unusual, and thought he could give her something big after he had trained her a bit.

John listened without saying anything at all in reply. He was bewildered and deeply hurt, as he tried to grasp her point of view. But he didn't like that manager's talking to her so. He didn't like it. All the same, he would trust Helen anywhere, and if this was what she wanted, he wouldn't stand in her way. He couldn't tell her so, but of course she understood. And, through with his breakfast, he fearfully approached her.

"Good-by, dear," he said tenderly, stooping for a kiss.

As he leaned forward, his gentle eyes aglow with hurt and love and yearning, the tension snapped, and she struck him, a cruel blow on the cheek.

"Go away and leave me be!" she cried.

"Look here," gasped John, quite dazed, "what's the matter? What have I done?"

"Nothing!" she retorted. "That's just it! You never do anything!"

"What do you mean?" repeated the astonished John.

"Go away! Let me alone!" she snapped. "You make me sick!"

"Hold on, dear. You don't mean that."

"I do!" she cried, taking a mad sort of pleasure in her abandon. "I'm sick to death of you! I think I hate you! I'm sorry I ever married you! Go away!"

John turned and went silently away. As he walked, he raised his hand now and then to his cheek, which still smarted from the blow. He was stung to the quick by his wife's words and the injustice of them. Had he not always been patient with her whims, yielding to her desires? And he was rewarded by this growing discontent, this fierceness of rebellion. It was almost, he thought, as if he had harbored a tigress in his home.

A tigress? Ah, that was it. She *was* a tigress. That was the reason for her eyes. And she had played with him as a tigress with its prey, showing her claws more and more often. And now she was tired of playing with him. She had shown it to him in a hundred ways of late. And what next? Was she to take up with that manager at the movies, and go out of his home forever, perhaps? He didn't like the way that manager had talked—about her not looking like a married woman. Why, it began to seem as if the woman he loved might ruin his life and suck his heart empty of its very manhood, all unhindered. Began to seem? No, for it was already true. She would never have struck him if it hadn't been already true.

He found himself growing angry as he walked along, and yet more angry. The gentleness was gone from his eyes and from his heart. He felt capable of cruelty or crime. Yet habit took him conscientiously to work among the animals he loved.

As the day waxed, his great anger continued to grow, until it held him entirely in its grip, as in the embrace of a flame. And so he was, that afternoon, when he tended on the tigress.

She saw the difference in him at once, and he was as quick to see the change in her that this difference brought about.

Suddenly he resolved to tame her. It was a thing that suited his black



"Leave me be!" she flared. His grasp only tightened. "Look at me!" he commanded.

humor. To strike the lithe form, to see it cower before him, to watch the wild eyes grow timid and cowardly—it would take away some of the sting from his heart.

Whip in hand, he boldly entered the cage. No one had ever dared to enter it so before. To clean it, great preparations were always made. There was a narrow alley way at the rear of the barred space, between the inner cage and the outer enclosure, where the animal took her airing. The door of the inner space was fastened back on one side. The door of the outer space was fastened back upon the other. Through the lane thus formed, the tigress was

driven, cajoled, or coaxed into going. The door then closed upon her, and the empty cage was cleaned. And this same slow process was repeated to clean the outdoor enclosure.

But to-day, whip in hand, he boldly entered the cage, his eyes stern and unyielding. The tigress crouched and watched him, all ready to spring if he showed the least sign of fear. He walked swiftly toward her and suddenly struck her with the lash, a stinging blow that sent her snarling into the farther corner. He followed her there, and with all the mercilessness of his mad anger, he lashed her until she whimpered at his feet for mercy.

As John Rick went about his work of cleaning the cage, he kept his watchful eyes upon the tigress. Never once did he relax his vigilance. Never once did his stern face soften. He felt almost disappointed to have conquered the beast so easily.

Then, all of a sudden, the anger died. It left him faint and sick, as a man who has just been freed from a raging fever. He stood still and looked at the tigress. She cowered in her corner, not yet alive to his change of manner.

"Poor beast!" he said aloud.

Pity possessed him for the creature so subdued, and he approached her once more, this time all gentleness. She shrank away from him, while her snarling grin widened. He stooped and patted the shining head and, forgetting vigilance—forgetting everything but his pity and his heartsickness—he turned his back upon her and walked out of the cage.

The iron bars of the door yielded to his touch. He pushed it ajar—not open, but ajar—and stepped quickly sidewise and out.

As he did so, the door was torn violently from his gripping hand, for the weight of the tigress had hurled it wide. That sudden sidewise step was all that had saved him. Had he been a second later, or the tigress a second sooner—

But as it was she lay stunned on the stone floor, and he, once more wild with anger, rained down blows until she recovered from the shock of her fall and retreated snarling, cowed by his fierceness and the pain that the stinging lash dealt out.

John Rick closed the iron-barred gate and leaned back against the wall of the narrow alleyway. Again came the terrible reaction, with its feeling of faintness, of heartsickness. And he was overcome also by the realization of what he might now have been but for

that quick, unconscious sidestep. The storm of emotion which had twice swept over him seemed to have left his brain bare, and into this emptiness of soul a new thought intruded. He pondered it for a while, and presently he gave it voice, amplifying it as he addressed the tigress.

"You were afraid of me when I looked at you so stern," he said slowly. "You cowered and scarcely dared to move. You even let me pat you on the head—you that always resented it if I so much as spoke to you. And you did all this because I was angered. But as soon as I was sorry for my anger, and turned my back on you, you sprang at me to kill. While I was kind and tried to please you, you scorned me. She's like you in lots of ways. I remember, that first day, when I told her so stern not to snap her fingers at you, she minded what I said. Maybe I've been too kind to her. Maybe she's like you in this, too. And if I could conquer you, I can conquer her. Not in anger, but in love, I can conquer her. It won't do any harm to try. My life is spoiled anyway, with things like they are now. Maybe you've done me a good turn to-day, you skulking tigress."

When he went home that night, the gentle look was gone from his eyes. Helen was getting dinner. She did not look either sorry or ashamed, but her restlessness had grown throughout the day.

She was frying pork chops on the small gas range, and she did not glance up from them at his entrance into the room. To his "Hullo, Helen," she answered only by a contemptuous shrug.

He went up to her and put his arms about her.

"Leave me be!" she flared. It was as if the tigress had bared her claws.

His grasp only tightened.

"Look at me!" he commanded.

At the new note in his voice, she

glanced up, startled. His eyes were blazing into hers.

"I've got something to say to you," he went on bluntly. "I've stood these actions as long as I'm going to, see? I ain't dirt, to be trod on. I'm a man, and I'm master here. Do you get that? Now kiss me!"

She struggled, intent on pulling away. Her eyes glowed back, unyielding.

"You're my wife!" he hissed. "You've got to listen to me! I'm sick of being your fool! I'm a man, and I've got a strong man's temper, slow to rouse, but now it's up, and you look out! Don't rouse me too far—that's all. Kiss me!"

"Kiss you? I hate you!" she breathed.

"You'll kiss me, and you love me," he retorted. "And the movie proposition is all up, see? I won't have my wife going around acting for a manager who says she don't look like a married woman. I won't have my wife stared at in any five-cent theater, either. You'll write that man to-night, understand? You won't go see him again. Now, then, you kiss me!"

Her wide tigrish eyes glared up at him, and his returned the glare with a somber, unyielding fire. For what seemed an eternity they stood there by the hot stove. The pork chops she was frying were sputtering in the pan. She still held the fork with which she had been turning them. With the other hand, she had lifted her checked apron to take the hot pan from the stove.

Their wills were about equally matched, but this sudden exercise of his brought with it a shock of surprise. She had thought him gentle and womanish, and she had held him in contempt. But as his eyes looked down into hers, stern and unwavering, she began to experience a change of heart. It was respect that rose up in her—respect, admiration, almost fear—and

she knew that she was conquered. Suddenly her eyes softened. She stirred uneasily in his claspings arms.

"Oh, all right," she said sullenly. "Hurry up. The chops'll burn."

"You kiss me!" he commanded. It had always been his part to make the advances. She rose on her toes and kissed him hastily.

"That's right," he said heartily. "Now see that you treat me right, my girl. I ain't putty any more. I'm iron. And I'm master here."

"I'm willing. Who said you weren't?" she retorted.

"I said I wasn't," he answered slowly. "I was a slave, and that was why you were tired of me."

She ventured a disclaimer.

"You were," he retorted rudely. "You were sick to death of me, and I don't know as I blame you. Next thing you'd 'a' left me. I know it. It was already in your mind. Well, that's all over. I've waked in time, thank God! And there'll be children, too."

"Why, of course," she assented, and because he knew that she did not want children, this quiet assent showed him, more plainly than anything else could have done, the depths of her submission.

In fancy he saw again the eyes of the tigress, first glowering at him, lambent with green fire, and then cowed and dazed, with their fire dead. He looked deep into Helen's eyes. They were dazed, too, and the flame in them was gone. Would a sweeter light grow in its place? He meant that it should, and with a sigh of relief at this ending to a battle hard won, he went into the dining room, to his place at the table.

They ate in silence for a little while. Then:

"I had a fight with a tigress to-day," he said. "And I won. Twice I won."

"Tell me about it, dear," she said.

"Some time," he promised.



HER BOY and HER BIT

BY MARGERY
LAND
MAY

ILLUSTRATED BY H. D. WILLIAMSON

In which a "baby doll" girl measures up to real love, and does it rather cleverly, too

YOU'VE seen her kind before, I'm sure. She was little, she was slim, and she had a disturbing little nose which she industriously calcimined, about a dozen times a day, with Dorin's white powder. She wore her dresses short, her boots high, and her light hair all crinkled over her forehead. She had big blue, blue eyes and a diminutive mouth, and she was just the type of pink-and-white-and-gold girl-doll that a fellow would nickname "baby doll." At least that was what Mortimer Barclay Jones called her, and she didn't seem to object. Her real name, however, was Wanda Perkins, and she was a hat model in Madame de Rosa's millinery shop on Main Street, Lakeport.

Madame de Rosa, baptized Nancy Green, paid Wanda twelve dollars a week and realized about twelve times that on the investment. Wanda could slap a dollar shape on her curly head, pull it down over one eye, gaze sweetly at a customer out of the other, and make the sale at about fifty per cent profit. Wanda, too, could talk with the tongues of men and of angels; and so, whenever a dissatisfied customer waddled into the shop, Madame de

Rosa turned her and her complaints over to Wanda.

"I'm just all upset about this hat you sold me, Miss Perkins," the customer would wail fretfully. "When you tried it on, it looked too sweet for words, but somehow"—here she would eye herself in the long panel glass, twisting her head this way and that—"somehow it doesn't seem to be my style. Perhaps it's too young for me. I guess"—and then would come the plaintive admission—"I'm getting old."

Whereupon Wanda, all fluttering skirts and blue eyes and curls, would run to her and croon reproachfully:

"Why, Mrs. Browning, how can you think such a thing? A woman with your skin and figure getting old! Nonsense! Here, let me pull the hat just a wee, teeny bit over your left eye. There! Now, if that ain't too chic"—Wanda pronounced it "chick," and I doubt if Mrs. Browning knew the difference—"if that ain't too chic and swell, I'll drown myself—I sure will." Wanda was always drowning herself about something.

And Mrs. Browning, all too willing to forego the privilege of seeing herself as "ithers" saw her, would press

a dollar bill into Wanda's hand and waddle away, with faith restored in herself, her hat, and mankind.

It is easy to understand, then, why Madame de Rosa treasured Wanda. Her besetting fear was that she would lose Wanda—that Wanda would get married. Madame de Rosa did not herself approve of matrimony. Three deserting husbands had proved to her that wedlock was a snare and a delusion. Therefore, it was with genuine anxiety that she cautioned Wanda about Mortimer Barclay Jones.

"Wanda," she said one evening, when shop had closed and they were putting away the hats, "wasn't that Morty Jones I seen you with at the movies last night?"

Wanda, who was applying another layer of powder to her nose, did not look away from the mirror or flush or flutter or in any way give evidence of being embarrassed. Instead, she fluffed out her hair and said:

"Mortimer Barclay Jones—that's him, all right."

Madame de Rosa frowned.

"Well, if I wuz you, I'd give Morty his walking papers. He's no 'count, that boy. And his mother—humph, she's so stuck up she gives me indigestion! You'd think she wuz the kaiser's wife, the way she prances into this shop with them mighty airs of hers! Take it from one what knows and leave them swells alone. All these jokes about mothers-in-law busting up homes ain't so funny but what they're true. Three husbands ain't left me without some knowledge of matrimony."

Wanda jerked her hat over her eye, adjusted her too broad patent-leather belt, dusted more powder over nose and neck, brightened her lips with a lip stick; then:

"Aw, Nance, don't be so hard on the old girl." Again she surveyed her trim little self in the mirror. "Any-

way, Morty ain't responsible for her being his maw."

Together they left the shop.

"Me and Morty's booked for a little snack at the park. S'long, honey," Wanda drawled, as she tripped away on her little white high-heeled shoes.

In front of Peyton's Drug Store, the most popular meeting place in Lakeport, Wanda was met by a tall, lanky young man who walked with a stoop and wore up-to-the-minute clothes. Spats were on his feet. In his hands he carried gloves and cane.

"Lo, baby doll!" he greeted her languidly. Then, putting his hand on her elbow, he guided her to the curb. "What d'you think of my new buzz wagon? Ain't it a peach? Birthday present from the mater. Jump in and see how she rides."

Wanda sank down in the cushions of the front seat and heaved a sigh.

"Say, Morty, do you guess they've got any flivvers in heaven?"

He laughed.

"Never visited the place, so I couldn't inform you," he said. Then he threw off the brakes, jammed his foot on the self-starter, and chugged up Main Street.

When they reached Lakeport Boulevard, Morty slowed his car.

"What you dreaming about, little blue eyes?" he asked; and then, before she could answer: "Who was that military guy I saw you with at lunch?"

Wanda's smile was a puckering, baby smile, and it made Mortimer Jones think of honey and moonlight and kisses.

"Oh, him? He's a captain in the regulars. He's here with the bunch what's guarding the oil fields from strikers. Name's Tommy Carter, and say, Morty, he says he was military instructor at Wentworth Academy when you was there."

"Tommy Carter? Sure, I remember him! So he's in the army now, and

a captain! What do you know about that?"

Wanda gave Morty's pallid face a sidewise look.

"He sure is one swell-looking guy in his uniform. Lordy," she sighed, "I wish I was a man!"

Morty's likable face fell into somber lines. He forced a laugh.

"You sure are gone on this war business, ain't you? I never saw a woman who wouldn't fall for army togs. Gee, it's a fright the way khaki and buttons affect you girls!"

Wanda's hand, like a wee, nestling bird, snuggled into his.

"Now, Morty, be a sport! Wouldn't you give a thousand of them simoleons of yours to have made the training camp? Come on, 'fess up. Didn't you 'most croak when they turned you down because you wasn't strong enough?"

Morty frowned.

"I'm a human being, ain't I?" he growled. Wanda's words were like picric acid on a raw and hurtful wound.

"Sure, you are, but what I'm wondering is why you don't get yourself trained up for the next camp. Seems to me you'd want to."

A dull flush mounted to his sleek, blond hair. His voice was gloomy.

"Oh, I want to all right, but mater's dead set against it. She says I'm too delicate and all that rot. Every time I mention war, she weeps." He shrugged his shoulders. "What's the use? It isn't as if anybody cared."

"I care. I care a lot."

His fingers tightened about hers.

"Say, doll baby, do you really care?"

"For khaki and gold buttons? You bet! I'm daffy about that Uncle Samuel stuff."

"Oh!" breathed Morty, and during the rest of the ride to Queen's Park, he was very sulky and stiff.

But when they were going through the intricacies of a jazz one-step in the park pavilion a little later, his mood

relaxed. With Wanda, all slim, short-skirted girlishness, in one's arm, it was hard to be aloof.

Between dances, they ate sandwiches and sipped lemonade. The sky deepened to night blueness, and the stars, like the multicolored park lights, shone out with radiant force. It was a lovers' night, and in the middle of it, Morty said:

"Let's sit out a couple. I wanna show you something."

Then, when they were again at their table, he took a tiny box from his pocket and tossed it to her.

"Give us your opinion on that," he said.

She opened the box and gasped at the brooch of sapphires and diamonds it held. Words failed her, but her wide, lash-shadowed eyes spoke volumes.

"Blue and sweet—just like your eyes—those sapphires are," he whispered. "I couldn't pass 'em up. Pin it on, sugar lump. Let's see how it agrees with the dress."

And during the next five minutes, all Wanda could think of was diamonds and sapphires and "Gee!"

But not even jewels such as those could keep her fairy toes still when the band boomed forth the raggedy notes of that raggedy rag: "I'm Glad My Mamma Don't Know Where I'm At."

"Let's dance, Morty," she said, and Morty engulfed her in eager arms.

The music dipped and rose and sighed and wailed and gurgled. Dancing in perfect accord, Wanda and Morty rose and dipped with it. So free and lithe was their grace that couples stopped dancing to watch them, and then park strollers, catching glimpses of them as they swirled this way and whirled that, came up the pavilion steps to join the other gazers.

It was Wanda who first became aware that they were giving a little Castlesque exhibition all their own.

"Say, Morty," she gurgled, "Irene and Vernon haven't anything on us. Pipe the mob, will yuh?"

Morty looked and gave her a little hug.

"Now for a few cabaret twists and turns. Let's show 'em how little old Manhattan trips the gay fandango."

He caught her deeper in his arms. The music wailed on with long-held, dipping notes. Morty and Wanda glided into a labyrinthine dance of swaying bodies and darting, pivoting feet.

But weariness finally compelled them to stop.

"Home?" asked Morty, as he paid their check and got his hat and cane. She nodded and let herself be guided through boisterous, clapping throngs.

"Some little dancing baby!" "Gee, ain't he the cutie, though?" "Betcha them's the two what's on at the Jester to-morrow." From all sides came the admiring, good-natured chorus.

"Some little hit, you were, baby doll," said Morty, as they reached the graveled walk leading to the parking place for motors. He smiled down at her, and she, all blue eyes and rosininess, smiled back.

"Say—little girl——" he began, and then, "Mortimer Barclay Jones!" rose a stentorian, metallic voice.

Morty stopped in his tracks and stared at the haughty, angular woman who, with lorgnon held to her steely eyes, confronted them.

"Mortimer Barclay Jones, what does this mean? What do you, my son, mean by making a common exhibition of yourself in a vulgar park pavilion?"

Wanda's eyes flew open. Her mouth gaped. She looked like a charming zany.

"Well, I'll be drowned!" she gasped. "If it ain't Morty's maw!"

The steely eyes and the gold lorgnon turned upon her. She threw up her little pink chin and smiled. In a soft,

croony voice that went with her baby mouth and big blue eyes, she said:

"Yes'm, it's me. I've waited on you once or twice in Madame de Rosa's hat shop. My name's Wanda Perkins."

"Indeed?" scoffed the acid Mrs. Jones. Then, as if brushing from her immaculate presence a speck of dust, she waved her hand and wheeled upon Morty.

But Morty, who had a manlike horror of scenes, asserted himself:

"Look here, mater, people are watching us. Let's don't have a row. Wanda and I are beating it back to town. I suppose you motored out with the Blakes. I see 'em over there, and if you want, I'll take you to 'em."

"Thank you," snapped Mrs. Jones, "I'll go alone." Her smile was icy. "Good night—Miss—er—er——"

"Perkins," Morty supplemented cheerfully. "See you later, mother. By-by."

"Don't pay any attention to her, baby thing," Morty whispered when, after a silent ride, they had reached the comparative seclusion of Lakeport Boulevard. In a tree-sheltered spot, he brought his car to a stop. "She doesn't mean half she says. Just leave her to me. And listen!" His arms went about her. "I'm just daffy about you, sweetheart. If you went back on me, I wouldn't care a snap about living or anything else." He hesitated a moment, to think of the desperate thing he would do. "I'd cut loose, if you went back on me and paid any attention to mater. I'd leave Lakeport and go Hun-hunting—that's what I'd do."

Her look was incredulous.

"Yes, you wouldn't! Your mother'd cut you off if you did, and you know it. She's said so many a time!"

"Pooh!" His exclamation held scorn. "What would I want with money without you to spend it?" He snuggled her closer and rested his cheek against her soft hair. "I'd dig me a



"Here, let me pull the hat just a wee, teeny bit over your left eye. There! Now, if that ain't too chic and swell, I'll drown myself—I sure will."

ditch in France if you stopped lovin' me." He laughed confidently. "But that's crazy talk, 'cause you do love me, and you're not going to stop, are you, hon?"

"Sure I love you," she whispered back, but her eyes did not seek his. Instead, they rested greedily on her diamond-sapphire pin.

The next day Wanda lunched with Captain Thomas Carter, emerging from that repast with the triumphant air of one who has fought a good fight and come forth victor.

When she entered Madame de Rosa's buxom presence at two that afternoon, there was a snatch of song on her lips.

"Lo, Nance!" she greeted, glancing about the shop. "Business dull to-day?"

Madame de Rosa, with arms akimbo, frowned at her.

"Well, it may be for me, but it ain't goin' to be for you! Didn't I tell you to leave that Mortimer Jones alone? Didn't I now?"

"I ain't denyin' that you did, Nance. What's the row?"

"A plenty! Mrs. J. Greenville Jones sailed in here an hour ago and asked me to let you off this afternoon. Said she wanted to see you and that her car would call for you at four. Of course I couldn't refuse. We honest working gurls always have to kowtow to the rich." Her sigh was doleful.

"Well, I'll be drowned!" commented Wanda.

At four o'clock, a shining blue

limousine, with two men on its box, drew up before Madame de Rosa's shop. Exactly two minutes later, Wanda was being whirled in the direction of the graystone palazzo that housed the sacrosanct Mrs. Jones.

Mrs. Jones was waiting for Wanda when she arrived. Greeting her with a curt, telegraphic nod, she said:

"I sent for you, Miss Perkins, to talk to you about my son. You know him well?"

"Just like I know my primer," Wanda admitted with sweet readiness.

Mrs. Jones clicked on:

"You think he's—er—fond of you, I suppose?"

"Yes'm, I know it. Morty thinks a lot of me."

"Umph!" grunted Mrs. Greenville J., and she thought: "The impertinence of the minx!" Aloud she said:

"You think he intends marrying you?"

"I wouldn't be surprised," the girl answered, and her eyes twinkled a teasing laughter that congealed Mrs. Jones to frost. Icily she cried:

"But I tell you he shan't marry you—he shan't! I won't have it! I'll disinherit him if he marries out of his class!" She forgot for the moment those humble days when Morty's grandmother had, before Morty's grandfather made money in oil, washed and wrung and hung many a tub of clothes. "Morty must do well for himself. I've got it all settled. He's got to marry Margery Blake—he's got to, do you understand?"

Wanda answered meekly:

"Oh, yes'm, I understand all right—but I'm wondering if Morty does."

Mrs. Jones suspected her of disrespect, but Wanda's expression was demure and still.

"If he doesn't, he will. You needn't worry about that." She hesitated. "Look here, my girl, Morty has no money except what I give him. Now

if you hope to marry him because he's rich, you may as well save yourself disappointment, for if Morty marries against my wishes, he'll have to shift for himself, d'ye understand?"

Wanda gave a dismal little nod. Mrs. Jones bristled on:

"Now I am a very just woman. I realize this is a blow to your hopes. It is, isn't it?" Then, as Wanda, with twitching lips and suffused eyes, answered with a nod, she said: "Exactly what I thought. Naturally you're disappointed. But then, my girl, you should not aim too high. Now, as I've said, I pride myself on my justice." She sat down at a Jacobean desk. "Now, if you'll promise me to let Mortimer alone, I'll make you out here and now a check for five hundred dollars." She cocked her head on one side and peered at Wanda with quick, darting eyes.

Wanda's small rose-leaf face puckered into thoughtful lines. Finally she shook her head.

"Well," snapped Mrs. Jones, "aren't you willing to do it?"

Wanda drooped her head.

"I'm willing to do it, all right, ma'am, but—but—you see five hundred ain't enough."

The pen dropped from Mrs. Jones' fingers.

"Not enough?" she gasped.

"No'm."

Ire flamed in the heart of Mrs. Jones.

"Do you mean," she spluttered, "that you—you—an ignorant, unlettered girl, demand—"

Sullenly Wanda interrupted:

"I ain't the one that's demandin', Mrs. Jones. Seems like you are."

They measured glances. Mrs. Jones capitulated.

"Very well, I'll give you a thousand dollars, but not one penny more." Viciously she thrust her pen into the ink and for a second there was no sound save the scratch-scratch of her

pen as she wrote. Then she blotted the check and offered it to Wanda. "Well," she said, "are you going to take it?"

Wanda smiled.

"Yes'm, I'm goin' to take it, but not before I say this: Remember you're paying me to leave Morty alone, and I'll stick by my agreement, but remember, too, I ain't got anything to do with what Morty does. I ain't responsible for him."

Mrs. Jones lifted an ironical lip.

"I don't think, my girl, you need be anxious about Morty—after to-day," she said.

Needless to add, Mrs. J. Greenville Jones' motor did not carry Wanda home.

Ten days later, on a Sunday afternoon, Wanda, all fluttering skirts and big blue eyes and curls, was strolling along the platform of the Lakeport Union Station. She was waiting for the incoming train from Chicago. On it, returning from her annual business trip, would be Nance. A book was in her hand. It was called "Confessions of a Wife," and she was devouring it avidly when, all of a breathless sudden, a man knocked against her.

"I beg your pardon!" he apologized. Then he dropped his grips and cried, "Wanda!"

She flushed a guilty scarlet, and she saw the light die out of his eyes as she drewled:

"Hello, Morty! Where you bound for in them rags?" Her glance took in his battered hat, his belted jacket, and the corduroy trousers that he wore tucked in his boots. Never before had she seen Mortimer Barclay Jones in any such attire.

His face darkened and he frowned.

"Oh," he explained, "I've cut the mamma-boy stuff. I'm off for the oil fields and a chance to toughen up and rough it. I'm trying for the next training camp. Tommy Carter's going to

try to get me appointed through the Wentworth School. If he can't"—his jaw tightened—"I'm going anyway, as a private." His mouth worked. He seemed in pain. "I told you I'd dig myself a grave in France if you went back on me, and I wasn't kidding, either, for that's just what I'm goin' to do."

She turned her face from his hungry gaze.

"But what about your mother, Morty? I thought she said she'd cut you off if you went to war."

He nodded.

"Yes, so she did, and so she has. But what difference does that make? What difference does anything make since you——" His hands went out to her. "Oh, baby doll," he cried, "why did you do it? You knew I loved you! If you needed money, why didn't you come to me? You knew I wanted to marry you——" He stopped abruptly, and his eyes were grim. "Oh, well, it's done now. I'm going to war, and you've got your thousand dollars." He cast a meaning glance at her white shoes, her flowered, drooping hat, her blue silk frock—all new, so palpably new.

She tilted her chin to a defiant angle.

"Yes, and I've my thousand dollars, Morty, so that settles it, I guess."

There was a swift interchange of glances, a sharp intake of breath, the pressure of two young hands, and then Morty grabbed up his grips and stumbled away.

That night Wanda said to Madame de Rosa, with whom she shared rooms:

"Say, Nance, I wonder if there's any one around here who could teach me to be a swell?"

That learning to be a swell involved sundry perplexities, Wanda was not long in discovering. She learned, for instance, that the élite, which she so longed to pattern, did not wear straw hats in February or furs in summer.



"Miss Perkins, may I present
Lieutenant Mortimer Barclay
Jones?"

They, so her mentor told her, were never conspicuously dressed, and shunned the extreme. Such cherished things as too broad belts and too short skirts they strictly tabooed. They did not use loud colors or carry walking sticks. They were, these swells, thought Wanda, a prunes-and-prisms people; and yet she was diligent in discarding gewgaws and foibles, along with twisted verbs.

Time spent in the excruciating process of putting off the old man and taking on the new goes quickly enough—at least it went swiftly for Wanda, and then there came *the* day.

On the afternoon of it, she was sitting in Peyton's Drug Store sipping

a chocolate milk when Captain Tommy Carter strode toward her with that soldier's gait of his. With him was another man—a straight young figure in khaki with gold bars on his shoulders. He held his chin high, and his chest forward, and on his face there was a steadfast, shining look. As her eyes met his, Wanda's heart beat a muffled tattoo.

Captain Carter clicked his heels together, took off his cap, and said:

"Miss Perkins, may I present Lieutenant Mortimer Barclay Jones?"

Miss Perkins seemed delighted. She gave the stern-faced soldier both her little hands. The captain tactfully and noiselessly tiptoed away.

"Morty, how did you do it? When did you get back? Won't you sit down?"

He did sit down, and then he said:

"I've just got my commission at Oglethorpe, and I pulled into Lakeport only an hour ago." His eyes blinked as he drank in this new Wanda, who was very lovely and very different in soft-toned, stylish gray.

"Wanda, you're—wonderful!" His voice broke. His hand went gropingly toward hers. His face showered tenderness upon her. Then suddenly he stiffened and drew his hand away. "How have you been getting on?" he asked.

Wanda took her cue from him.

"Fine. And you?"

He shrugged.

"Oh, I've been jogging along all right. I'm glad to be in the swim of it. I should have been before, if it hadn't been for mater."

Wanda nodded.

"And your mother? Have you seen her? Is she well?"

He shook his head.

"Couldn't say. I haven't seen her. Mater"—he smiled—"says she's washed her hands of me. I'm all she has, and she hates to see me go. But nothing could stop me now."

Her brows puckered.

"Is that on account of me, Morty?" she asked.

He gazed away.

"Yes and no. If it hadn't been for you, I wouldn't have tried to go, but now that I know more about things—about conditions and all—I see that every living man has his part to do in this war. My part"—his hand clenched—"is to fight!"

"Oh!" she breathed, and her spirit seemed to flow from her parted lips and touch him like perfume.

Eyes still averted, he went on:

"I shall see mater, of course. She'd die if I stayed away. And now"—he

rose, and to his lips there came a twisted smile—"I've got to go hunt up some of my banker friends and find me a purchaser for some Liberty Bonds. An officer's equipment costs like the deuce, and all I'm worth, detached from mater, is two thousand dollars in Liberty Bonds." He laughed.

She rose, too.

"Morty," she said, "call a taxi and ride me home. I've something there to show you."

He hesitated. She begged, "Please, Morty!" and ten minutes later, he was in the tiny, chintz-hung sitting room of the flat in which she lived.

"I've only a minute to stay," he told her.

"A minute is all I want," she said, as she darted away, leaving him ranging up and down the room with rapid, nervous strides.

Soon she was back again, and in her hand she held a little jewelry bag.

"Morty," she said, as she plumped herself down on the divan and motioned him to her side, "I've a little story to tell you. No; don't talk. Listen to me." She paused; then began soberly: "Once upon a time there was a silly girl who loved a boy who was very rich—at least his mother was. And this boy led a lazy, happy life and didn't care much about anything but the girl—but I think he did care for her."

He sat very straight and still.

"Yes," he said, "he cared for her."

"And the girl loved him, too, and she knew he was fine underneath, in spite of—"

"In spite of being molly-coddled by his folks?" he supplemented.

"Yes, that was it. And the war came on, and the boy didn't seem to care much about that, either. His mother didn't want him to fight, and it seems he didn't mind. He just spent his time dancing and riding and playing around with the girl—the girl who wasn't in his class—"

His fingers gripped hers.

"Yes, she was. She was dear and fine and true."

"But his mother didn't think so. She wanted him to marry well, and so one day she sent for the girl and offered her five hundred dollars if she'd leave the boy alone. But the girl said no, she wouldn't do it for five hundred, though she might for twice that much, and so the mother gave her that much—a thousand, I mean. And the boy heard about it, and it sort of woke him up. Once he had told the girl he'd break away from everything and go fight and die in France if she ever went back on him, and so, sure enough, when he heard about what the girl had done, he began to carry out his threat. And when the girl found out he had worked in the oil fields like a common roustabout, in order to get strong enough and fit to be a fighter, she was so proud she 'most——"

But he would not let her finish.

"Darling!" he cried.

Love had its little moment. Then Wanda broke away from Morty's arms and, opening her bag, dumped a sheaf of fifty-dollar bills upon his khaki knee.

"And here," she continued soberly, "is the money the boy's mother gave the girl, and now the boy, who is a soldier, a lieutenant, and a man, needn't sell his Liberty Bonds to——"

Love claimed another moment, and that moment grew and grew.

"Darling," said the boy to the girl, "I think that's a beautiful story, but tell me one thing: Why didn't the girl think five hundred dollars enough?"

"Well, there was the soldier's outfit to get——"

"Yes," he put in promptly, "and his marriage license to buy."

"Y-e-s, and his marriage license." Her little fingers clung to him. "And then the girl hoped there'd be enough left to buy back a diamond-sapphire pin she had sold to Nancy Green."

"Sold! Good heavens, why?"

Ducking her head, she toyed with one of his buttons.

"The girl—wanted—to be—good enough—for him, and so—she sold the pin—to get—the money to pay some one to teach her——" Her voice trailed. Her head drooped lower.

He clutched her as if he were clutching life itself.

"Teach her what?" he prompted, and his look was full of pity.

She hid her face against his breast.

"To be a swell," she whispered. Then she sobbed: "And, oh, Morty, I'm almost one, ain't I? Ain't I?"

He kissed her tear-flushed eyes, her tumbled hair, her soft, up-curving lips.

"Are you? Well, I guess! Such a little queen!"

"The Hotel Scandal"

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The MENTOR and The MAID

ILLUSTRATED BY
O'CARTER

FRANCES HARMER
Author of "Mr. Anerley's Mendacities," etc.

Sometimes a man is as "blind as a bat"!

I THINK it's a bit too bad," said Helmer Castner, genuinely annoyed, "to have brought me down from New York—for a trifle like this!"

His mother and his Aunt Alicia regarded him with a kind of submission that was not without its reserves. Since the publication of his novel—a book they were frankly unable to understand—Helmer had been the great man of the family. And he was too young not to give himself some of the airs of greatness. He stood now, on this October evening, a tall, slim, well-set-up young fellow, with a face that was both pleasant and intelligent, though too serious. The seriousness, moreover, was not for the situation, but for himself. That he should have been summoned by wire from a publisher's dinner should have amused him as showing the absurdity of the parental estimate. It did not amuse him, because he took it as a tribute—in this case, a very annoying tribute—to his own judgment.

"Dinner is served," said the maid.

"Will Miss Bernice dine with us?"

"Go and ask her," said Mrs. Castner.

"She's coming down now, 'm," said the maid.

Helmer turned to survey the newcomer with the sternness demanded by the occasion. Here he was, dining in a small suburban town, with his father and mother and maiden aunt, and a ridiculous, nine-times-removed young cousin, when he should have been adorning the table of Drewett & Bain, his publishers.

The culprit came in very quietly, almost shyly, with her eyes downcast. She was a mere slip of a girl, but the promise of beauty was undeniable. Her bent head showed satin-smooth brown hair, adorned with a little wreath of white rosebuds and green leaves. She wore a simple white frock, with a cluster of the same flowers and leaves at her belt.

"How do you do, Cousin Helmer?" she asked. She had called him Cousin Helmer all her life.

"Very well, Bernice, thank you," he answered, with a touch of solemnity.

The dinner restored his complacency a little. It was so obviously a festival banquet, with the very best that lay within the culinary ken of his female relatives and a touching remembrance of his likes and dislikes. The savory of which he had spoken on his last



Helmer saw that she had improved very much since their last meeting—perhaps a year ago.

visit—as an English custom worthy of importation—was there—a very good savory indeed. And it was also in deference to a comment of his own that the coffee was served in the drawing-room, by the fire, instead of at the dinner table.

Bernice carried herself as a culprit should. Though silent, there was no hint of sullenness in her deportment, and her answers to any remarks addressed to her hinted at gratitude for the notice. As she sat

at the little percolator, dispensing her cups, Helmer saw that she had improved very much since their last meeting—perhaps a year ago. Her slight

form had rounded out, and her complexion had improved—was, indeed—exquisite. He studied her small face, and was pleased with the delicate oval of its shape, the shadow her lashes cast on the cheeks, and the firmness of the little pointed chin.

Without any excuse, his father, mother, and aunt left the room, the old gentleman first offering him a cigar. He was now to do what he had been sent for to do.

For a few moments, he did not speak. Instead, he sat and stared at Bernice, who had moved from her post and taken a seat by the fire, opposite his own. The room was a very pleasant one, with furniture that had grown familiar, with the fragrance of cut flowers and the light of well-shaded lamps. For the first time, Helmer admitted to himself that, on the whole, he was content to be here.

"I'm sorry," he began at length, in a serious tone, "to hear of this—this vagary of yours."

"I'm sorry to make you sorry, cousin," she answered—what a pretty, flutelike voice she had!—"and I feel a little like that princess who wouldn't marry Henry the Eighth. Do you remember her?"

"If you have to go so far back for

a precedent"—he hated to acknowledge that he had forgotten the princess, and he *had!*—"I am afraid you stand self-condemned."

"Oh, but you wouldn't have had her marry him?"

"I'm more interested in you than in her," he evaded. "Perhaps I don't see the parallel."

"She said that, had she two heads, one should be at his majesty's service. I say that, had I two lives, one should be spent—in pleasing you! But, as I have only one, I—I must develop along my own lines."

"Need those be—dancing lines?"

"Dancing is the thing I do best, the thing I am happiest in doing, the thing that expresses me."

"Dance as much as you like, but why in public?"

"What good would it do you to write books if no one read them? What good would it do me to dance if no one saw me? *Your* books express *you* to the world. My dancing is to express *me*."

"My books will, I hope, do a little more than amuse, Bernice. I suppose you scarcely say that your dancing will improve anybody?"

"Isn't it improving to see what is graceful, beautiful? My teachers tell me my dancing is both."

"Dance for your friends."

"You don't write for your friends—only."

Helmer's tone grew more stern.

"My dear Bernice! Understand, distinctly, that we shall all combine to prevent your doing this insane thing! You are under age. You have no money. If you push matters to extremity—"

Bernice shot a glance at him. Her eyes were softly hazel, deep, liquid, lustrous. When she drooped them, he wanted to look into them again.

"If I push matters to an extremity—what can you do? After all, I am nineteen, and that is of age in some

States. Cousin Helmer, I don't intend to stand for any tyranny! I won't be kept in school, I won't be shut up here! I want New York and freedom and opportunity. What I shall do—if you all oppose me—is simply this: I shall go to New York at the first chance, see a manager—"

"Managers don't grant interviews to unknown little country girls," Helmer began to grow exasperated with her persistence. "You would only expose yourself to endless annoyance and humiliation."

"How do other stars begin?"

"Other stars! My dear child! I think I must see that you do go to New York, under proper chaperonage, and see 'other stars.' Have you any idea of the training it requires, even to be the most negligible member of the cheapest chorus? Years of hard practice, under hard conditions."

"For girls without talent, that may be so. But—"

She rose and went over to the Victrola—the Castner family's concession to modernity—and set on a record. She swung round, leaning her hand on the rosewood case.

"Look at me, Cousin Helmer."

Lifting her filmy skirt, which he now saw was of extraordinary width, she began to dance to the melody of Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King."

She was as light as foam, as graceful as a fawn. She had been well trained in folk dances, "artistic" poses, ballroom dances, of a slightly antiquated style. The waltz, irreplaceably graceful basis of rhythmic motion, had saved her from jerky, vulgar, angular movements. As she tripped and swayed and swung about, she was curiously poetical and charming, her dancing seeming the expression of a yearning for life, a half-mournful sense of loneliness, of a child not yet fully awake, yet losing the placidity of complete unconsciousness. She was a delight to

watch, and Helmer was keenly interested in her. Nothing about her innocent posings—all of them suggesting a nymph in a flower-filled meadow—was within a thousand miles of anything hinting at love, yet Helmer felt his pulses quicken as they had never quickened before in his hard-working, self-centered young life.

When the music ran down, she drew her measures together in one final grouping, as it were, that ended in a picture—you almost saw the trees up to which she was apparently looking, almost saw the blossoms on which she seemed to sink.

She rose to her feet.

"There!" she said, with childlike *naïveté*. "Didn't you like that?"

She came swiftly toward him, scarlet lips parted breathlessly, cheeks glowing from the exercise, eyes alight with pleasure. Helmer wanted to take her in his arms and comfort her for what he had to say.

"It was charming, Bernice, charming. But"—he saw the delight pale into wondering anxiety—"not a whit better, my dear, than the dancing of a round dozen pupils in any dancing school. I've been to their final exhibitions—whatever they call them—and seen, as I say, a dozen just as good. No one of them thought, I am sure, that she had a career before her, that she would pale the memories of Genée, Pavlova, Isadora Duncan, Maud Allan, just because she was naturally graceful and a credit to her teachers. Neither need you."

He drew a breath of relief when the whole brutality was out. He felt as if he had smashed a child's doll.

But of a curious change in himself, he was unaware. It did not occur to him, that, for the first time, his thoughts had ceased to center round Helmer Castner, the rising young writer—that he was wholly occupied with the little cousin to whom his mind had never

turned, save when, as earlier in the evening, she had chanced to be staying with his parents. Now that he was, so to speak, compelled to focus his powers of observation on her, he saw that she was delightfully charming, of quite unusual beauty, and now—as her slight frame began to quiver with emotion—able to stir him to his very depths.

There was a moment's complete silence when his dictum had been spoken. He glanced at her as she stood before him.

She had turned away, and her hands went up to her face. He saw her bowed shoulders shake a little. She moved back to her seat—the big arm-chair his mother had vacated—and sank into it, sobbing softly.

"Oh!" she said. "Oh!"

Helmer rose and went over to her. Her face was buried in her hands, which were buried in a cushion. He laid one hand on the heaving shoulder next him.

"Come, come, child!" He spoke very kindly. "I know that what I said sounds very hard, very harsh. But I want you to make your life a happy thing, dear. I want to save you from suffering and bitter disillusionment. You have no need to face these for your bread, as some girls must. You are sheltered and loved here, and mustn't fly away—just for diversion."

"I thought"—the words came broken, half muffled, from the cushion—"I thought I danced—so very well."

The fact that he had destroyed this pleasant fancy smote Helmer with a pang of self-reproach, while he could not but feel tenderly toward the sobbing little creature to whom his verdict was so heartrendingly final. He moved away from the chair, for he was beginning to feel an unaccountable longing to clasp that trembling form in his arms, even to kiss away the tears from those soft, round cheeks. He mustn't be an idiot, he told himself, with an

instinct of holding himself back from a precipice with a very slippery edge.

"You do dance well. I never want to see anything more delightful," he reassured her. "Only, not as public dancers must. Can't you be content with pleasing—those who love you?"

She did not answer, but she had stopped crying.

"Come," he said, "dry your eyes and let me tell them all that you are a good, sensible girl, and that they must put their heads together to see what they can give you to make up for this disappointment."

She sat up obediently. Then he started, for on her tear-wet face was a grief, a desolation, that seemed out of all proportion to its cause, so far as he could fathom its cause.

"My dear child"—he put his hands on her shoulders and pulled her up—"you mustn't feel like this! I had no idea you had set your heart on it—in

this way. Bernice, I should *like* to give you what you want, but this—this is quite out of the question, dear. I couldn't have you—on the stage. I couldn't endure to think that any one, with the price in his pocket, could see—what I saw to-night."

She turned away from him, a flaming color crimsoning her face, even to the tips of her little ears. He could have groaned. Not content with smashing her doll, he seemed to have hurt her in some new, inexplicable way! What a little mystery she was!

"Bernice," he murmured, "I—



She began to dance to the melody of Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King."

I—don't want to make you unhappy. Isn't there something else you want?"

She shook her head.

"A trip?" he suggested eagerly.

"No, thank you." Her voice was low, subdued, yet there was no hint of either temper or sullenness. She was unutterably sad, but not resentful. His heart ached for her grief.

"Bernice—you believe I would say yes to this wild plan if I could?"

He felt he could not bear her silence.

"Look here." He caught her hands.

"You're making me miserable—do you know that?"

She let her hands, like little fluttering birds, lie in his, but she did not answer.

"And you don't care?"

She gave him one shy, upward, fleeting glance; then the long lashes hid her eyes. He was still holding her hands, and now he drew her gently closer to him, though all the time he had that sense of standing on the edge of a slippery precipice.

"You—don't care?"

He went right over the precipice and held her in his arms. He bent his head to hers, put one hand under the little round chin, and turned the face up. He kissed her, and forgot the world!

But after an æon of bliss, she startled him. She pulled herself from his clasp and began to cry—with something new in this grief, as he felt without being able to define.

"Bernice—beloved! What is it? Are you afraid to tell them—yet? We'll wait, and I'll send a few wires and stay down here, so that it won't seem so sudden. Or shall I run up to town and come back"—he lifted her left hand to his lips—"with a ring?"

She drew her hand from his, gently, but very decidedly. She moved away from him and looked up at him. He began to wonder *where* his eyes had been, all these years, anyway? She was the most perfect, the most ex-

quisite, the most adorable creature, and — He went to her, but she retreated, putting up her hand. There was so much sincerity and reality about her now that he was almost awed. What a *mystery* a young girl was!

"Cousin Helmer—"

"Drop the 'cousin.'" He smiled, though he still regarded her with puzzled anxiety.

"You must never give me a ring. I—I—can't be—engaged to you. No, never. I really mean it. I'm—not playing. You may tell them"—she glanced toward the door—"that I have given up the idea of—dancing. But—nothing else."

"My dear," he said, very gently, "I was too sudden. But then it was sudden to me, too. It came on me with—a *swoop* that why I couldn't let you go on the stage was because—I wanted you. Only I should have waited, not been so—so—"

"I'm going to tell you the whole truth." Her soft voice grew hard as steel. "I never dreamed of going on the stage, really. I knew the years it took. I knew the work it took. It was just—a trick!"

"What?"

She lifted sad, sincere eyes to his.

"A trick—to make you notice me! You never would! And I—oh, I've always—cared! Then, when you grew so rich and famous all of a sudden, and I thought of the beautiful, brilliant, clever women who'd be wanting you, I—I thought up this trick—to make you look at me—and see me dance! But—it was so shameful, so unworthy! You must go away, and forget—"

She was not able to finish!

"But the wonder still is," said Helmer, when they had decided that the family must be told, "that all this time this lovely thing was waiting for me—and I never knew it!"

Bernice smiled—faintly.

A MOTHER



MEN

by AMANDA B. HALL

Author of "The Little Red House in the Hollow," "The Dream Life of Jane Dorr," etc.

An unusual story of two sons. David, the unselfish, claims his own.

MRS. HANDFORTH was in close communion with her letter. A high-spirited, rather biased woman, her face bore the memory of suffering even in the moment of her delight.

"Annie, Annie!" she called instinctively.

From the hallway materialized a middle-aged servant, who had long ago brought her country personality into that city home, permeating the atmosphere like a geranium leaf in a jar of jelly.

"Oh, Annie, such good news! How can I tell you?"

"Try!" suggested Annie dryly.

With facile affection, Mrs. Handforth threw her arms about the gaunt figure and felt Annie's kind pressure in return.

"Kenton's coming home!"

The dramatic announcement failed of the desired effect. Ashamed of her unresponsiveness, Annie stood playing with her apron, honest eyes lowered.

"Cured?" she asked baldly.

The mother bridled slightly, for she could brook no criticism of her son

from others, and with the very thought of him she drew apart in passionate monopoly. But Annie was a privileged person.

"There seems no doubt of it this time. Doctor Kinsella says they have a great surprise for us. I suppose that means Kenton is keen to plunge himself in work."

A wave of intense and bitter feeling swept over Annie's face, but aloud she said:

"If he only would have a mind to for Mr. David's sake! When's he calculate to get here?"

"The steamer docked yesterday noon, and I shouldn't be surprised if by evening— Oh, Annie, I can't help crying, I'm so happy! This time I really believe!"

She sought her chair and shed a few illogical tears, while Annie, with amusement and good-heartedness, patted her shoulder.

"Bless you, ma'am, you always believed!"

But Mrs. Handforth was deliberately deaf. Her cheeks had taken on a delicate flush, like a young girl's in

anticipation of love. She sprang up with a graceful energy and threw a critical glance about the charming room, severe in simplicity, yet with concessions to comfort, the table tolerating a wilderness of books, an intimate chair nearby, and a sewing stand that refused to be orderly. She fluttered about doing negligible things to the furniture, the while Annie schooled herself to absorb with patience the directions for dinner, minute, momentous directions.

Dear Kenton had such pronounced tastes! Now with David it didn't matter; David was lacking in appreciation of what Kenton termed "the romance of food." It scarcely occurred to Mrs. Handforth that David had not been told the news, or that Karl, her grandson and Kenton's motherless boy, was as yet in ignorance of it. She was still futilely busy when the home-keeping David unobtrusively entered, an old man of twenty-nine, with conscience hung about his neck like a millstone.

David was as blond as those early Britons discovered by the Romans on their first expedition to the island and pronounced "not Angles, but angels." Nature had designed him for the joy of living, but the exigencies of life had dimmed his splendor. From his dead father, he had inherited a weight of obligations, and he had accepted his spiritual endowment with proud resignation. Mechanically he dropped into his mother's chair, looked his watch in the face, and picked up the morning paper. Then he scented her excitement.

"What's up, mother?" he yawned, lifting his head for the matutinal kiss. "Kenton is coming home, dear David!"

She stood away to regard his tell-tale face and enjoy his surprise. When her silence had forced him to accept it as truth, he met her eyes with censored calm, though underneath it all, tumult pounded within him.

"It can't be true, mother, of his own accord."

"That's what Annie said, but it is true!" she exulted. "And he's coming to us regenerated, starved out for wholesome occupation! It simply means, David, that alcoholism is a moral as well as a physical disease. When it ceases its ravages of the body, the mind recovers, too. You see, mother knew what was best for him, dear. She knew that everything would come right if we were unsparing in our efforts, unsparing in expense, too. Now you'll have Kenton to share your responsibility in the business. Aren't you glad?"

But David sat staring into space with an expression of disbelief on his face.

"Glad?" he muttered. "It seems such a *punny* word!"

Her hand fell on his shoulder. She was ever pleading, mutely or otherwise, for Kenton.

"We'll soon forget what we've been through—that terrible crisis of our affairs you managed alone, and all that we've suffered—when we have him back again, his own fine self."

Still staring before him, the young man spoke with an effort:

"Yes, mother."

He reached up and covered her hand.

"We'll remember how horribly he's paid," she went on softly. "Those dreadful cures, the deadly desire, and the racking remorse!"

He had hard hold of himself now not to appear ironical.

"Yes, indeed, mother."

But the thought persisted rebelliously—Kenton had never paid the piper; they had paid for him, he and his mother, to the last cent and the last ounce of effort. As he rose to set his face toward the keen business day, his mother rushed to him and figuratively offered him a sweetmeat. What she had to spare from Kenton she was always quite sweet about giving to David.

"There'll be Kenton in the business now, Davy." She tossed the realization as lightly as a ball. "You can ask her now, dear! You can ask her now!"

"Who?" he demanded with unconscious roughness. "And—what?"

"Her," she repeated, essaying a fresh smile, "Aramie—to marry you."

David was slow to grasp the import of her words, but when he did, a spasm of sensitive fear passed over his face. Surely she must hear the throbbing of awakened chords within him. Breathing heavily, he turned toward the fireplace with the tiny, bright heart of coals persisting like the hopes he had carried all these years.

"Of course," said his mother's voice in offended justification, "I merely suggested. But there! No doubt you've entirely forgotten poor Aramie by now."

And she left him to his mental isolation. In all his reticent, prosaic life, no such primitive moment as this had ever come to David Handforth. He laughed. It was not a pleasant laugh. It came from him rude and raw, and Annie, hearing him from the next room, was as shocked as she would have been to surprise some strong man sobbing. Forget Aramie, with her frail, sweet-lipped beauty and her steadfast, immortal soul? As hope stirred faintly within him, an expression of crazed joy awoke in his eyes, and it became vitally necessary that his welling emotions have outlet. At the psychological moment, he spied "good old Annie" and rushed to drag her in.

"Would you mind—that is, I must talk to some one, Annie, or burst!"

Flattered and frightened, she yielded to him. He thrust her unceremoniously into a chair and began to pace up and down.

"You probably never knew," he burst out all at once, "what I was suffering when Kenton went abroad? You didn't know how I kept a hand at

my throat to throttle the coward in me that wanted to chuck the whole thing and run?"

"No," she answered, her face twisted into sympathy, "but a body could see there'd been too much put upon yer. You went through it with real good courage, poor lad."

"Oh, well," he disclaimed credit, "a man doesn't fold up like an accordion every time he gets a wallop."

From his pocket he boyishly produced a photograph case, and his eyes triumphed when the hard-bitten features of Annie melted.

"She's much prettier than that," he boasted. Then, confidently, "But I'm awfully fond of this little picture. It's been with me a long time, and she looks so sort of quaint—like a child that's been told to watch for a bird to come out of the camera."

"And good," said Annie.

He smiled with security on that point.

"Yes, Madonna eyes, but a witty mouth. You'd love her yourself, Annie, just as I did."

"Is she dead?" asked Annie, and piously folded her hands.

He withdrew the photograph fearfully.

"What an idea! And yet she might be. No, she was full of singing life when I saw her last. But that was an age ago. It's six months since I've even heard from her. Do you remember when my brother went abroad? It was then I realized what Aramie meant to me. She seemed a kind of answer to everything. Then, in back of all the companionship, I found there was a rarer thing between us. She seemed to hold out something maternal, something mother has never given me, kind as she is. You know how Ken has always been her concern, so much quicker and cleverer than I?"

Indeed Annie knew that, for Mrs. Handforth, there had been but one son

in the real sense. But David was spiritually returning to that wonder time of his love, to the night when he had surprised it in his heart and learned it from her lips.

"I wanted to tell her," he came back to the woman for sympathy. "You can't know what it cost me not to."

Annie's worn hands twitched to comfort him, but she rigidly controlled them. David's face was averted, and there was just his bright, rumpled hair to stir her woman's heart.

"When I remember," he told her dully, "I go frantic. Mother's grief was so big and absorbing, there was room in her heart only for that. She said that we couldn't assume responsibility for another, with Kenton as he was, Karl to be taken care of, and the business in jeopardy. She told me Aramie would wait if she cared for me, and so I was forced to silence, feeling her letters becoming hurt, then cold, then—oh, God!—friendly!"

He rose, searching pitifully for his cloak of reserve. It was proof of his essential loneliness that he had made a servant his confidante, but Annie's unspoken sympathy was sweet.

"Thank Heaven, that's ended!" He counterfeited lightness, rising and thrusting his hands into his pockets. Annie followed his movements adoringly.

"An' me all the time thinkin' it was Mr. Kenton's little wife ye loved, Mr. David!"

"That poor child? I was sorry for her, Annie, as frail as a flower and about as uncalculating, and Ken was—you know. Well, God was good to Hilda, Annie."

"Yes," mused the woman dryly, "He let her die."

Then, regretting the melancholy trend of the conversation, she cocked her head to one side and regarded him with birdlike perspicacity.

"Don't go, Mr. David, till you've

written—your pretty," she urged sentimentally. "Tell her everything."

His smile flashed forth irresistibly.

"Shall I?"

But already the desk drew him, and silence ensued, save for his hurrying pen.

As David wrote, the outer door opened and a lad of some ten years entered with ponderous slowness. He was of goblin build, fostering the impression, when he walked, that his feet were on rockers. His forehead was large and bulging, he wore bonerimmed spectacles, and he carried in one hand a mammoth, ill-shapen beet. It was as if his glasses had magnified the beet.

"See," he said, exploiting it, "see what I found for my collection! I like it. It's such a freak, like me!"

And as David glanced around indulgently, he explained the points of it with scientific precision. A curious mixture of intellect and weakness, Karl required careful handling, and David sometimes despaired of ever wholly understanding him. Looking at Karl, he would remember poor, neglected Hilda, and black thoughts would come into his heart. Touched by the ludicrous picture the boy presented, his uncle dropped his pen and extended his hand.

"Do you know, Karl, that your father is expected this evening? That means," announced David, with his inevitable conscience, "that he'll be your daddy now."

"I remember him," conceded Karl, strictly neutral. "He wore riding clothes and always had a good time, and sometimes he whacked me with his crop—in play, I guess, but the crop meant it."

David bit his lip.

"It must have been in play, Karl, for—well, he's your daddy."

"But I'm your boy," was the hurt rejoinder.

"You'll always be that," David as-

sured him, for the moment unmanned, "but in a way, you see, his is a prior claim, so you *must* be glad to see him."

"All right," agreed Karl amicably. "It's immaterial to me."

His vocabulary was an ever-growing wonder, and David concealed a smile. Then he thrust a coin into the boy's outstretched hand, a hand peculiarly like an old man's.

"Run to the post box and drop in this letter and, Karl, after you put it in, pull down the lid to see if it really slipped through, and—and, Karl, hang around till you see the postman collect it!"

Karl treated him to a gargoyle wink and took his departure.

"Oh, sugar!" was his knowing comment.

Later, David, too, was one with the mellow morning, knowing he would be late for business and not caring. He felt a glad renaissance, and found himself suddenly endowed with a voice which happiness prompted him to use in tuneless scraps of song. How Aramie had laughed at his inability to carry an air! Now he was able to remember without the penalty of pain. And his body, strong in well-being, marched hand in hand with his spirit.

The men at the factory, who had stood by him in the uphill fight of the past two years, were quick to note the change. They had not known that he could laugh, and they seemed to draw nearer him in a pleasant, indescribable way. The spring day drew to a pensive close, and he walked home, almost visibly companioned by charitable thoughts.

Poor old Ken! After all, he had had to be given this last chance, and if mother seemed to love him *because* of his frailties rather than *in spite* of them, why, that was her weakness and her strength.

At home Mrs. Handforth was dressing, for she had asked some friends in

that evening to welcome Kenton back. Karl, demoralized by the killing of the fatted calf, sauntered from the kitchen, licking his lips, and was about to take a look for his uncle when he encountered at the front door a young woman in traveling clothes. She emanated a fragrance delicately enticing.

"Oh, how do you do? May I come in?" She was engagingly humorous.

"You're in already," said Karl, with a boy's terrible frankness.

"Then may I stay?" She hesitated, in some awe of that small, but sophisticated figure.

With inimitable manner, he indicated a chair.

"My grandmother's busy dressing. My father's coming home, but——"

"Thanks, I think I won't sit down." She acknowledged his condescension with a smile. "You say you're expecting your father? Oh, then you must be very happy."

"Well, we're going to have a grand dinner." He conceded the advantages of the arrival.

Her eyes revealed anxiety.

"I didn't mean that exactly—but glad to have a *real* father again."

Karl spread his diminutive chest and regarded her sharply.

"An uncle's good enough," he got out slowly, but on guard against sentiment. "Uncle Dave's a cinch—awful easy. He gave me a quarter this morning for doin' nothin' 'tall 'cept postin' a letter. A nawful important letter, I guess."

But his wink was lost upon her. Of a sudden her face was sad and introspective. She was picturing David in close companionship with this uncanny child, and the incongruity of it bordered on pathos.

"It was your uncle I wished to see." She twisted slim hands in distress.

"Well, you can sit down, then, 'cuz I gotta go an' freeze the ice cream. He'll be home soon, kinder tired an'

glum, with lots o' papers an' things. Good-by."

"Good-by," she echoed humbly, wishing that he had not left her in the dark, both in the literal and the figurative sense.

For here in David's house her task loomed momentous; she wanted to break down and weep. At this juncture, Annie entered quietly and, with the pressing of a button, the shaded lamps sprang into glow like dusky, night-blooming flowers. Simultaneously there was a step in the hall, and her heart's high, throbbing answer. Annie had never seen her before, but knew her instantly. Instinctively she retreated as David entered, with the papers beneath his arm which represented the evening's unrelenting program, but with an air of lightness foreign to Karl's prediction. As she rose, he stood regarding her with the humility one accords one's transient visions.

At that moment all the maternal in Aramie West went out to him, a tenderness more dangerous than infatuation. But the situation demanded her strength and her control. Determined to master it, she arrived at being only faint and weak.

"Aramie!" He spoke hoarsely.

"Oh, David dear!" She was fairly successful in response. "How glad I am to see you!"

With the tangible evidence of her hand, he became more assured, though his speech was fumbling like that of a man in a dream.

"How fitting that I should find you here! You always seem near when people light their lamps. Do you remember the lights along the cliff at W——?"

She nodded, with a wave of color, her eyes lighting to strange beauty.

"And the tangle of wild roses where we used to walk beside the bay—and, oh, the scent of bayberry and thyme across our sand dune, David!"

"Not forgetting," he added joyously,

"the hotel's collection of antiques and horrors, all eager to chaperon us!"

She wiped away tears of laughter. It was David who had taken the situation from her and made it just the blessed reunion of a man and a woman who had loved. She must make an effort. But David went on in the same dreamy voice:

"It's been two years, Aramie. How many days is that?" His quick laugh was almost like the old David's. "Only think, I wrote you this morning! It's the unbelievable coincidence. I haven't the remotest idea how you came here and I don't care, for now you'll stay. Mother is happy, too, expecting home my brother Kenton from across. You never met Kenton. May I remove the pins?"

She became aware that the sensitive, exploring hands, with such power to set her trembling in the past, were hovering about her hair and the sleek, small turban that crowned her head.

"David!" she protested, faint for joy.

"Are you real?" he demanded close to her face.

"Yes, oh, yes!" she answered in fright and in corroboration. "My steamer docked yesterday. I've been in England for six months. I'm a real woman, silly."

"I'm a man," he answered hoarsely, and without warning took her in his arms, kissing her till, in sweet and shameful weakness, she had no power to combat him, till he seemed to have drawn her very life away and left her sinking in a death more delicious than any life she had known.

"Oh, David!" she cried brokenly, and staggered away from him, seeking to distill into ragged phrases the truth he must accept. "It is too late! I came to tell you——" She whipped herself into a rage of resentment. "Once I was yours for the asking. That other time, I thought——"

"What you thought was true, littlest," he pressed after her in distress. "Let me explain——"

"You should have explained *then*, and I would have listened. It's too late *now*," and he saw the tragedy in her face. "While I was in England, I met your brother. I saw the kind of man he is, the trial he must be to you. Every one there is fired by the spirit of sacrifice, and it occurred to me I might be doing a great thing for Kenton, spiritually maimed, by saving him from himself. And his need of me! Oh," she challenged, "you have no idea how a woman needs to be needed!"

His incredulous silence increased her defiance.

"Yes"—she nodded vehemently—"I have given Kenton my promise, and he in turn has sworn a solemn oath to henceforth do his duty by his boy—and you."

And as he continued to watch her in horror, she went on, justifying herself after the fashion of those who renounce the one big ideal.

"What better thing was there for me, David? After caring for you, I could let no man win me to the thought of love—and Kenton was your brother. So I came on ahead to tell you. That was Doctor Kinsella's surprise, for he says I am the only real cure Kenton could have."

But she pressed her fingers to her eyes, afraid to look longer upon his shocked face. Believing that he had held her lightly, she nevertheless shared his suffering.

Outside there was the frank banging of a trunk and Mrs. Handforth's voice lifted in welcome. Slowly in David's eyes dawned the knowledge of how he had been cheated. Then Kenton, his mother, and the doctor entered volubly. Evidently Kenton had been prompt with his news, for Mrs. Handforth's face already proclaimed it. At that moment, she would have accepted any one her

prodigal had produced in the rôle of future daughter-in-law, much more such an acquisition as Aramie, and absorbed as she was by the present, the possibility of David's still caring for the girl became remote.

How smart Kenton looked, and how carelessly cosmopolitan! What a picture mother and son made! David drew back, hurt by the glitter of them.

"My dear child"—Mrs. Handforth appropriated Aramie—"how delightful to have you back! Kenton has just been telling me—and now I know what the doctor meant by his surprise!"

The doctor, a young man with an incipient beard, smiled his complacency at the match. David could see that the gay spontaneity of them had affected Aramie. Even he felt its insidious influence, and the old conventional impulse returned—to withdraw with his hurt and suffer in silence. Then into his beaten face came the protest of his manhood. What had it gained him, playing the worm? Aramie was promised to Kenton now because he had not had the backbone to claim her. They had tried to cheat him, but he would not be cheated.

"How are you, Davy Jones?" demanded the homemaker with patronage. "Where are your congratulations? I declare, you've grown to be a glum dog!"

"I can't shake your hand," said David with dynamic calm. The atmosphere of the room had changed subtly as they recognized his hostility. "Nor will I congratulate you."

"But, David——" began his mother painfully.

"Kenton has stolen from me, mother." David turned upon her with quiet acumen. "He stole my right to ask Aramie to marry me, and while I waited, he asked her himself. Yes, that is what he did for us, Aramie and me. Isn't it true, littlest?"

Her dark head drooped, while glad-

ness, like physical joy, assailed her. Doctor Kinsella manifested the shocked concern of those who pretend there is no cake beneath the frosting of life. But Aramie suddenly gave them her eyes, candid as a boy's with the truth. For the first time, she saw herself managed into a loveless union by this immature doctor, with his mistaken standards of goodness. She saw herself as the prop of a weakling, and the vision appalled her. Kenton's face was honest in its surprise.

"That's an infernal lie, for if you ever cared for Aramie, I swear I did not know it."

"How could I tell him, David?" she appealed, and the tone was unmistakable.

It brought Kenton to her side with a supplicating hand on her wrist.

But David had cast off his old horror of "scenes."

"I'd rather you didn't do that," he asserted dangerously. "Let Aramie alone. Aramie belongs to me."

To see her sons thus ranged against each other in open hostility was crucifying to a mother of men, but the girl between the two brothers glowed savage and proud.

"You know it *now*," David was saying grimly, "and mother has *always* known it, but she would have let me be cheated out of life and love without a qualm. Mother," he reproached her,

as his hands went out to cradle the girl's head, "see how nearly you came to ruining both our lives!"

"But, mother," pleaded Kenton, and he caught at her shoulders in desperate urgency, "I need her so! I must have something for which to live and be decent. It's real this time. Help me!"

"Hush!" she quieted him unexpectedly. "It's David who needs her, and they love each other. Can't you see?"

Yearningly she moved nearer the two, seeing not Kenton, but David, as the shorn lamb, and with this new perspective was roused a fierce, protective love for him. Consciousness of fault in that greatest of all careers for a woman dimmed her eyes.

"David, David!" she whispered repentantly, "I've been a very bad mother to—one of my sons."

The doctor coughed decorously. Karl, remembering his promise to David, was advancing into the room toward Kenton.

"How do you do?" he proffered civilly; then, with uncanny perception, he noted that the other's old superficial gayety was gone, and the fact touched him. "Have you come home to be my father?" he asked.

In the doorway stood Annie, her expression reminiscent of "the smile on the face of the tiger."

"Dinner is served," she said.



The Wife of Asa Pincheon

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "The Lady of Rocca Pirena," "The Footpath Way," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

An absorbing romance of married life—of young love that is sweet and thrilling, and of jealousy and passion that are dangerous.

WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.

Marjorie McDermot, daughter of kindly, easy-going Doctor McDermot of Salesport, and Asa Pincheon, son of a wealthy summer resident of the town, meeting by accident, fall in love at first sight and are married shortly after. In spite of the passionate love between them, there are possibilities of tragedy in their marriage. Marjorie, true daughter of her father, is generous, warm-hearted, full of eager friendliness for all the world; Asa, though fine in many ways, is a true Puritan in others, narrow, self-righteous, swift to condemn and slow to forgive. The first clash between them comes on their honeymoon, when Asa objects to Marjorie's accepting a portrait of her mother from a young artist, Eric Curtis, to whom Marjorie feels almost as close as a sister. Asa is really jealous of Marjorie's affection for Eric, but he puts his objection on the ground that the picture is too valuable a gift for her to accept from a man not related to her. He is too blindly in love, however, to press the issue. But after he and Marjorie return to Boston, his jealousy of Eric increases. The young artist has a studio in town, and Marjorie sees a good deal of him. A cousin of Asa's, Eyadne Lawrence, to whom Asa had been paying desultory attentions before he met Marjorie, takes Eric up as a sort of fad and persuades Asa to let him paint Marjorie's portrait. The crisis comes when Eric is sued by a jeweler for some presents he has made to a French actress, Madame Médore, to whom he has been notoriously devoted. The newspapers, in playing up the story, mention the fact that he is painting the portrait of Mrs. Asa Pincheon. This is too much for Asa, and he forbids Marjorie to have anything more to do with Eric. Marjorie refuses to give up a friend simply because he has got himself into a scrape, and the result is the first really serious quarrel between the young people.

CHAPTER X.

SO Asa got home yesterday? Did he have a good trip to Detroit?"

Mollie McDermot looked up from her inevitable mending and glanced shrewdly at Marjorie's pale, apathetic face. They were sitting together in the renovated bedroom, all bright chintzes and weathered oak, which had been the young Pincheons' Christmas present to Mrs. McDermot. Marjorie was unexpectedly spending the day at her old home.

"Oh, yes, I believe so." The girl brought her eyes back from a survey of the untidy old garden below the house,

still bleak and forbidding with leafless vines and straw-wrapped bushes.

"He got home yesterday, I think you said?" The mother's voice was miraculously guileless, and her eyes were once again upon the heel of her stocking.

"Last night," Marjorie confirmed the time of Asa's return. Her voice was lifeless.

Suddenly she turned from the window overlooking the garden and cried, with an animation which her manner had lacked during the whole of the visit:

"Mother, what time is it? Is your watch right?"

**The first installment of this story appeared in the September number of SMITH'S.*

She was at the bureau by this time, looking at the face of the old-fashioned thick gold watch at the end of the old-fashioned long gold chain which was among the earliest of her recollections.

"I wonder if I could make the three-fourteen back to town."

"I think you'd better call up central. I dropped my watch in front of Gifford's meat market the other day, and it's been a little uncertain ever since. I wouldn't go by it."

She spoke placidly, but when Marjorie, acting upon her suggestion, went to the telephone stand, she studied the girl's face intensely. She had known its every look for more than twenty-five years. This was the first time that she had ever seen it blighted by that air of a secret trouble. Worried, annoyed, sad—she had seen it all of these. But never before had it been marked for her wise, loving eyes with the mark of something hidden, not to be shared.

"Oh, dear, mother! Why can't this family ever keep a timepiece right? Your watch is wrong! I can't make the three-fourteen. I shan't get back to the city until nearly dinner time."

"I'm sorry, chicken! If you had let me know when you came down——" Mrs. McDermot began vaguely. Then her face brightened. There was the sound of a closing door. "There's your father, now. Perhaps he could run you over to Canterbury. There may be a train on that branch."

"I'll look it up in the time-table," cried Marjorie hopefully, "while you're asking dad——"

"She broke off. There was a rap at the door.

"May I come in, Mrs. McDermot?" It was Eric's voice.

"Yes. Oh, how do you do, Eric? What brings you to the provinces today?"

Eric, very debonair and cheerful, was shaking hands with his hostess. He was explaining that the doctor had

picked him up near the station, had run him up to the house, and had now gone into his office downstairs.

"And what," he wanted to know of Marjorie, "are you doing here, after throwing me down on a sitting?"

"Oh, I wanted to see my mother. Homesick. Besides, I had so many things to do to-day that the only way I could preserve my sanity was not to do any of them—just to cut and run. And so I did. But how about you?"

"I have a perfectly good reason. I left a lot of sketches and some materials up in Dan's closet last fall—some Spanish-costume things. We need them for arranging the Crippled Children's Bazaar. And since you left me high and dry, I thought I might as well put in the time coming down here. Besides, I wanted to see your mother. I wanted to reassure her mind. You saw about the silly suit that fool jeweler started against me?" He looked inquiringly toward Mollie McDermot.

She shook her head reprovingly at him, but her eyes twinkled.

"Yes, I saw it. But when are you going to grow up? When are you going to learn not to buy things just because you like the look of them at the moment?"

"Never, I hope," declared Eric airily. "That's the only reason for ever buying anything, or for ever doing anything—because you want to do it at the moment, regardless of consequences."

"You're a silly boy," declared Mrs. McDermot with a little asperity. "And you run the risk of being a very unkind one. This business of having what you want when you want it and doing what you please at the moment is apt to make trouble for other people. Take this poor jeweler, for example——"

"Poor jeweler nothing! The man's paid. Of course I paid him. He knew perfectly well that I was going to, as soon as I got the money. What he was after was advertising. He got it. So

did the New York Spring Academy Exhibition. And the Holton prize. I ought to get some kind of a rebate or commission from them all! But that's one of my reasons for coming down—just to get your scolding over. Have you been getting into debt, too, Marjorie—doing the things you ought not to do and leaving undone those you ought to do?"

"If Marjorie's been doing anything foolish," her mother struck in, with one of her keen glances toward the girl, "she hasn't confessed it. I'm vain enough to believe that she just came down to see us. Merely a little homesick, as she says."

Marjorie rewarded her mother's expression of confidence with a smile, a brilliant, happy smile.

"I've found a train from Canterbury," she announced breathlessly. "If only father can drive me over, everything will be all right——" She broke off in some embarrassment as she heard her own telltale expression. "I don't mean that anything's wrong," she added hastily. "Only I should like to get home well before dinner."

Doctor McDermot, it appeared, was happily free for an hour. He could take Marjorie across country to the other railroad line without, as she put it, "without having any one die on him" in the interim. The shadow that had been upon her all day lifted. She was as eager to get back to her place in town as she had been eager to leave it.

"I'll come along with you, if I may," announced Eric cheerfully, reappearing in Mrs. McDermot's room with a portfolio of sketches and an armful of fabrics. "It was going to be rather a jam to get around to the rehearsal in time. Miss Lawrence calls those rehearsals too early. A civilized human being ought to be mixing the oil and vinegar for his salad at eight o'clock. So I'll come along with you, unless you've got some secrets to talk over."

"I haven't any secrets," said Marjorie.

But she said it a trifle lifelessly. For once, she was in no mood for Eric. All her thoughts were sweeping on toward her meeting with Asa. She did not understand how, but in some mysterious way her little runaway visit to her mother had solved a problem, had healed a hurt. When she had left her charming apartment, she had been possessed by a dull sense of injury and injustice. Asa had made no further reference to their quarrel of the night before. He had not, as her hope and her love had half led her to expect, come to her, penitently, and begged her to forgive his anger, his tyranny. But neither had he attempted any further enforcement of his wishes.

At the breakfast table, he had been formally polite. He had made one or two casual references to news in the paper. He had kissed her good-by almost punctiliously. And he had left her with the sense of outrage even stronger than it had been the night before. In her hasty breaking of all her engagements for the day, and in her flight down to Salesport, there had been an element of defiance to him. She would not lead his life; she would lead her own, old life—for this day at least!

Of course she had confided nothing to her mother. At least she had confided nothing through the medium of language. Not for worlds would she have spoken against her husband. Not for worlds would she have exposed to any other eyes the conduct and the opinions which to her seemed so narrow and ungenerous. She was angered against him, but, even so, the instinct to protect him from criticism was strong within her.

Besides, of what earthly use would it be to tell her mother the circumstances of their estrangement? Her mother and her father had never, she was quite sure, quarreled in all their life together.



"May I come in, Mrs. McDermot?"
It was Eric's voice. "And what,"
he wanted to know of Marjorie, "are
you doing here, after throwing me
down on a sitting?"

Yet, mysteriously, the instinct that had led her home had proved the right one. There was some spiritual contagion of affection there. In that abode of outgiving kindness, of warm tolerances, there had come upon her a sudden rush of generous feeling toward Asa. Why, her heart seemed to say, of course! How could she claim such depth of understanding, such loyal forgivenesses, for the faults and foibles of all the rest of the world and yet exclude him? It seemed to her that love and comprehension surged anew and healingly upon a spirit numbed by the first, devastating experience of a violent hostility toward one beloved.

And it would have been so with Asa, also—she knew it. At some moment of his day, too, light had broken upon the cloudiness of his soul. Of course, of course! To him also had come the divine voice saying: "But, foolish children, you love each other! What else matters?"

Still, she wished that Eric were not to be the companion of her return trip. It was not that she had any longer any fear of Asa's attitude toward him; the clearing of her own spirit of its animosities had somehow removed all doubts of her husband's ultimate understanding. But she would have liked to be alone with her father, and then she

would have liked to be alone with her thoughts, her new, deep, glad conviction that anger could not coexist with love.

"Let me take the wheel, dad," she said, as they stood in front of the house. "I haven't driven since I was married."

"All right. Oh, how are you, doctor?" Another car had drawn up behind the shabby runabout.

"I'm just in time, doctor." The newcomer spoke with nervous speed. "There's been an accident down at the mill. Jump into my machine, will you? We'll need to get as many men as we can——"

"I was just going to drive my daughter over to Canterbury to catch a train there——"

"How do you do, Mrs. Pincheon? Glad to see you. You can drive yourself, I know. Leave the car at Adamson's garage, and I'll take your father over after it as soon as we can be spared."

"Oh, father! Oh, Doctor Carson!" Marjorie's face was distressed. "But that will be so much trouble for you. Of course I *could* wait for the down train from here——"

"Nonsense, Marjy!" struck in Mrs. McDermot, who had accompanied the group to the sidewalk. She had divined some deep reason for the girl's visit, some deep reason for her sudden impatience to be back. "Go ahead. You'll be in town an hour earlier this way. And I'll make Doctor Carson take me along to Canterbury when he drives your father over, and I'll come back with him. It's a lovely day, and I shall enjoy it. Off with you!"

"Well, if you don't think it's too much work. Call me up and tell me about the mill, will you, mother? And what we can do, Asa and I, if there's serious trouble?"

Warmth and confidence again unfolded her. She knew how prompt would be Asa's response to any need of which she told him, among the mill

operatives. She was proud of him, of his strong sense of civic usefulness. She was glad that he had the means as well as the will to be kind in emergencies.

"My love to Frances," she called as she adjusted her switches. "I'm sorry not to have seen her. Tell her not to bob her hair—her hair's so pretty."

She met the farewell smile in her mother's eyes fully, gladly.

"Everything is all right. I was a silly, bad-tempered little fool," was the message she silently telegraphed.

And her mother's answer was: "You're a young thing in love, my dear, and there are all manner of misunderstandings and hurts ahead of you, but not one of them matters if you bring love and common sense to bear!"

The road to Canterbury was charming, even in bleak March. It wound inward from Salesport and the scent of the sea, through woods and hills and scattered farm lands, for ten or twelve miles, until it came to Canterbury, which would have been a mere hamlet but for the meeting of two branches of a railroad line, which elevated it to the doubtful dignity of a country junction. The road was an old-fashioned country one of dirt, wet in spots with spring thaw, but firm enough for travel.

Eric talked; when did not Eric talk, she wondered! He was chattering of Spain and of Evadne Lawrence's bazaar; of the New York Spring Academy Exhibition, and of a supper he meant to give at his studio; of Trudy Crothers, and what a good wife she would make for the somewhat saturnine Dan; of Frances' recent trial flight into the realms of "freedom." Frances had had a *vers libre* poem published in the *Boston Transcript* and, heartened by this success, she talked of giving up her position in Miss Baird's School and of "living her own life" in Boston.

"She seems to think that smocks and cropped hair are the badges of the liv-

ing-one's-own-life brigade," commented Eric.

But to all his amusing fusillade of chronicle and criticism, Marjorie made but absent-minded replies. She smiled, and her eyes, when occasionally she lifted them for a moment from the road ahead and met his, were full of soft, happy lights. But she was plainly miles away in thought from him.

They were driving through a stretch of woods, the ashy color of its bare trees pricked here and there by the dark of an evergreen or warmed by the bronze of an oak, still tenaciously holding its withered leaves. Suddenly, as they essayed a little hill that climbed from a swampy stretch of road, a sort of shriek came from the mechanism of the car. It stopped.

Frantically Marjorie threw her throttle wider, advanced her spark plug, tried by sheer will power to force it up the ascent. One or two hiccupping revolutions rewarded her, and then came a stop and a slow sliding backward. She adjusted her brakes and halted the machine.

"What's wrong with our good little Lizzie?" inquired Eric.

"No gasoline, I'm afraid," was Marjorie's stony answer. "Get out, will you, please?"

"You're an uncannily gifted girl, Marjy," cried Eric in mock admiration, as he obeyed her request. "Think of knowing what ailed the little demon without having felt her pulse or taken her temperature!"

"That dying shriek generally means there's not enough gasoline to carry the car up a hill," explained Marjorie. "Besides, I know dad. And to think I forgot to ask him about gas!"

She was measuring the contents of the tank. She drew out the rule and looked at the telltale line of moisture.

"Just as I supposed," she said despairingly. And then, passionately: "Oh, what shall I do?"

"Why, I should advise your climbing back and allowing me to do the same thing. Then we'll smoke a cigarette or two while we wait for another car to come along and tow us up the hill."

"I must get back to town! I must!" cried Marjorie feverishly.

"Of course. So must I. But it isn't really a matter of life and death whether we're back at half past five or two or three hours later, is it?"

"You've got to go back and get me some gasoline at the last house we passed," Marjorie interrupted.

"Dear girl! We haven't passed a house for three-quarters of a mile! Better wait for a tow."

"A tow! How many machines have we seen since we entered this road? Not a single one! Nobody uses it for a car at this time of year—nobody except the shiftless McDermots!" she ended with sudden savagery of intonation. "The shiftless McDermots, whose clocks are always wrong, and whose watches are always broken, and whose gasoline always gives out!" She burst into tears and sobs.

"Why, Marjy! Why, my dear girl! My dear child! Of course I'll go anywhere for gasoline! Why, you foolish little baby, you! You're all unstrung!"

He patted her soothingly on the back. She raised her tear-stained face and essayed a smile.

"Never mind, Eric. It wouldn't do any good. The train would have gone before you could get the gas here. We'll wait. Dad and Doctor Carson will be along by and by and then— But, oh, Eric, it's true, it's true—what I said! Why do such things always happen to us? Because we're no-account, because we're shiftless and thriftless and ne'er-do-well! Oh, I don't know what I shall do!"

She seemed again on the verge of tears.

"See here, Marjy, I don't know what's eating you," said Eric, attempt-

ing to administer the tonic of brutality. "I suppose you're missing a date with friend husband. But, honestly, that isn't the end of the world. There'll be plenty more dates to make with him. And meantime you shan't slander your family, not while I'm here to stuff your silly, undutiful words down your throat."

"I didn't mean dad and mother, of course," said Marjorie weakly.

"Oh, yes, you did! The two kindest, best people on the face of the footstool! And you must abuse them because you've missed a train! Because your father was too much taken up with the thought of a crowd of mangled mill hands to remind you about your gasoline tank! Because he considered human lives more important than your dinner! Now listen to me, young woman! I'm going to foot it back to that farmhouse, and I'll telephone your spouse from there and I'll——"

"Oh, no, no! You mustn't telephone Asa!"

He looked at her face, suddenly stricken with panic. As she met his eyes, she colored furiously.

"So that's it," said Eric slowly.

"So what's it?" Marjorie parried weakly. "I don't know what you mean. And about telephoning, I'll come along, too, and telephone myself."

"Look here, Marjorie. Don't you think you owe me a little bit of truth? Did Pincheon—did your husband—forbid you to give me any more sittings because of that jeweler business? Does he think I am too disreputable an acquaintance to be admitted to his sacred hearthstone?"

"He—he—— You have no right to question me about Asa, Eric!"

"Well, you've answered," declared Eric, rather grimly for him. "Never mind, Marjorie. He'll get over it. He's a man of the world, after all. Hang it, he must be a man of the world! He can't go on being a Puritan elder of the

year 1670 clear into the twentieth century!"

"Naturally I don't intend to discuss my husband with you, Eric. Come, let's go on back to that house and telephone."

"Aren't you afraid to leave this valuable car in the middle of the road?"

"Don't make fun of the poor old thing. Besides, every one knows that it's dad's. And, besides again, no one is going to pass. But I'll lock it, to relieve your mind."

She reached into the car and withdrew the key from the magneto box. Then they turned and walked down the damp road into the gentle twilight of the hollow wood. Again Marjorie was silent, but this time there was no look of tender anticipation upon her face. In spite of the exercise of walking rapidly, she was pale, and Eric, watching her attentively, affectionately, saw that her young mouth, which had always kept the glad, expectant curve of a child's, was pressed into a sad little line.

"See here, Marjorie," he said, catching her by the arm familiarly, "I want to tell you something. You know how fond I am of you, don't you?"

"Of course, Eric. You're fond of all of us. Sometimes"—a fugitive gleam of the old, humorous Marjorie played for an instant across her face—"sometimes I think you're fond of everybody."

"There are exceptions," Eric told her. "However, we needn't talk about them. I know I give the impression of being a pretty indiscriminate ass."

"I didn't mean anything like that. Not really. I'm sure you're very discriminating in your choice of real friends. I only meant that you took people easily—didn't set up any pattern to measure them by before you liked them. Just as we do ourselves, we McDermots."

"No, I'm not just like you McDermots. There's a great deal more

warmth and depth to you. Oh, I don't delude myself about myself." Eric uttered this boast with an air of fatuous pride. "You people, or at any rate your mother and father, are like the warm sunshine on a chilly day, or like a hearth fire that you can always crowd one more chair around. But I—why, Marjorie, I'm like nothing better than the reflection of the sunlight, or the fire, in a mirror hanging on the wall. I know myself."

"I don't think you do quite know yourself, Eric," said Marjorie kindly. "I'm sure you've given us more than a mere reflection of feeling."

"That was what I wanted to talk to you about. It's the most genuine affection I've ever had in my life, the one I have for you people. Especially for your mother. You know, I never knew anything of a home. My father and mother were divorced before I was old enough to remember. The courts gave me to my father, which, I suppose, is saying enough about my mother."

"My grandmother brought me up, and let me tell you she wasn't one of those indulgent old dames that spoil their grandchildren! Very much the reverse! She resented having to go back to running a nursery when she was fifty-odd, and having a very good time looking like forty and running all the local feminine activities of the town. Besides, she never liked my mother, and I understand I am a good deal like her. No, I never knew what a home was. The servants brought me up until I was old enough to send away to school. I reached that age rather younger than most—or they thought I did. It's a wonder to me that I have any capacity for affection left when I think about my childhood."

He spoke bitterly. Marjorie looked at him, interested despite her pressing absorption in her own affairs.

"Poor little boy!" she said.

"Yes, I was a poor little boy. I didn't

see my father for weeks at a time, even when I was a very little shaver. He married again not long after he divorced my mother, and his new wife, being a person of decision"—Eric laughed harshly—"made a bargain that she was not to have to undertake the bringing up of her predecessor's brat. Oh, don't look so shocked! She didn't use the ugly word."

"But she made the stipulation!" cried Marjorie angrily.

"Did you know that when I was a little fellow of about nine, I tried to chuck it all? No, of course you didn't. That's one of the things I'm not in the habit of talking about. Sometimes I almost think I've forgotten it, but——"

"Chuck it?" Marjorie stared at him bewildered. "You don't mean—you surely don't mean——"

"Yes, I do. There's something about the looks of this place"—they were down in the depth of the damp, gray little hollow now, and he paused to stare across the sapling rail of a foot-bridge at an ice-fringed bit of brook—"that reminds me of the place where I tried to do it when I was a forlorn little kid. I had just seen my father with his wife and some of the new crop of children. Morbid little rat, wasn't I?"

"Oh, you poor little boy!"

Marjorie's head went impulsively out to him. He pressed it gratefully, but dropped it at once.

"Oh, I don't want to make you pity me too much. They fished me out, and I was only too glad to let every one think it was mere awkwardness. I hadn't any aspirations after Byronic effects then, any more than I have now. It does seem to take me the deuce of a time to say what I started to say. These autobiographical bits interfere with the flow of the narrative."

"Well, what did you want to say?"

"Only that your house was the first real home I ever knew anything about. Only that your father and mother gave



"Don't build too much on that, Mar—Good heavens! What is that?" Two automobiles made their way toward Salesport, and the second one was Dr. McDermot's battered old runabout, attached by a chain to the car ahead.

me a little taste of what a real father and mother might mean to a fellow. And that you—you and Frances—have given me some appreciation of what it would be to have sisters. And I'm so fond of you all and so grateful to you all that, upon my word, if it would help any of you to have me cut up in little pieces, I almost think I would be willing to undergo it! And if you think it would help you, Marjorie, to have me vanish from your circle, why, you have only to say the word."

"Well, I don't think anything of the sort!" Marjorie spoke with energy. "It's too absurd! Of course you've guessed right. Asa did hate it dreadfully to see my name—his name, that is—printed in such a messy proceeding as you got yourself into with that jeweler and Madame Médore. And I dare

say I was quite unreasonably angry with him for being unreasonable, and so we had a quarrel. But of course we're not going to stay angry with each other."

Her face grew radiant once again with joyful belief. All the warm impulses and emotions roused in her by the recital of Eric's childhood had re-established her, as it were, in her old, accepted way of life. Kindness, generosity, fondness, forgiveness—these were the natural things, these were the right things, these were the only possible things. Asa would see that great truth, once she presented the case to him clearly. It was only because she had lost her temper that she had failed to convince him last night. There would, presumably, be a few minutes of awkwardness over this ridiculous delay of

hers in getting home, perhaps even over the chance meeting with Eric. But with a few words she could clear that up, and then—why, then, the world would be golden again.

The house to which they were returning lay back from the road an eighth of a mile, near the crest of a rather high hill. It was a gray, unpainted little place, with a straggling orchard on one side and a row of elms and giant lilac bushes half screening it from the view in front.

"They're patients of dad's whenever there's anything really serious the matter," said Marjorie, as they made their ascent. "The rest of the time, they prefer patent medicines. Truly, they could level the swamp down there, using their old bottles for filling, the Hodges. I hadn't been here for two or three years, but Mrs. Hodge is a funny character. You'd enjoy her."

"What are you going around to the back door for?"

"As if you hadn't been enough in the country to know that no one ever goes to the front door!"

But the back door was as firmly closed in their faces as ever a front door could be. Two or three hens ambling around the dilapidated kitchen porch scurried away when Marjorie and Eric came up the steps.

"Go off a little way, Eric, and look at the chimney. See if there's any smoke coming out." Thus Marjorie, somewhat anxiously, when several resounding raps had failed to elicit any response.

"Nothing doing in the smoke line," Eric reported from beside the pump.

"Oh, dear! But it's impossible that they should all be out. There are seven of them. And Mrs. Hodge is always saying that she doesn't get away from the place from one year's end to the next. We'll try the front door. Maybe she's at work, house-cleaning or something, in the front."

But the front was as inhospitable as the rear had been.

"Some one may be down in the barn. Come, let's go see."

Passing round to the back of the house again, Marjorie led the way to the weather-beaten barn back of the house. The door was closed, but not bolted, and she opened it, calling as she did so. A horse whinnied, but that was the sole reply.

"Never mind, Marjorie," said Eric reassuringly, as he marked the gathering anxiety of her looks. "I'll do a little burglarizing. I'll break in through the kitchen window. There never was a kitchen window yet in the country that couldn't be opened. I'll get in and open the door for you, and then we can telephone."

But the unlawful breaking and entry consumed more time than the telling of them. Fifteen minutes had elapsed before Marjorie stood at the telephone in the hall between the parlor and the kitchen and agitatedly demanded long distance.

Finally she was connected with her home. The soft-voiced Tolty replied. No, Mr. Pincheon was not at home and had not telephoned during the day. Yes, he understood her; he was to say that she had gone to Salesport to see her mother and that she had missed her train and would not be able to get home until about half past eight, but that Mr. Pincheon was not to wait dinner for her.

"But he will! But he will!" she kept telling herself insistently. He must wait dinner! He must *want* to wait dinner! He must feel as she did—that the next bread he broke must be a feast of reconciliation.

"Might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb," remarked Eric, coming in as she hung up the receiver. "I broke into the tool house and stole some gasoline. Will two gallons be enough to start the blooming thing?"

"Yes, that'll be enough. We'll turn around and go back to Salesport. Lend me a pencil, please, Eric. I'll leave a note for Mrs. Hodge."

The note was written, the price of the telephone call and of the borrowed gasoline was inclosed. The envelope was placed in the most conspicuous position possible—fastened to the lid of the kettle. They went out again. The afternoon was bright still here upon the high clearing. There was a warm, primrose light in the west. There was the feel of spring in the air. At such a moment of sweetness and promise, every good thing seemed possible. Marjorie turned her shining face from the western light toward Eric.

"I'm sure, Eric," she said, "that you and Asa are going to be friends when you get to know each other. More than that," she ended with an air of prophecy based upon determination, "it's going to be very good for you to be friends. Each of you has something to give the other."

"Don't build too much on that, Mar—— Good heavens! What is that?"

They had come around to the front of the house by this time and were outside the lilac screen. He pointed to the road below the rough hillside. Marjorie looked.

Two automobiles made their way toward Salesport, and the second one was Doctor McDermot's battered old runabout, attached by a chain to the car ahead.

CHAPTER XI.

Outside the door of the apartment, Marjorie stood still for a second and drew a deep breath. She was frightened, ridiculously, shamefully frightened. Would Asa be at home? Not once had she succeeded in reaching him on the telephone. When she and Eric had gone back to the Hodges', and had called up, first his office and then the

house, he had been at neither place. Then they had summoned a car from the Salesport garage to carry them back to that town. Arrived there, they had perforce stopped at her home. There must be a word of explanation with her family. Besides, they were condemned to remain there until a train that made a slow, oft-stopping crawl up to Boston at half past nine. They might as well go home as not!

She had telephoned again from her father's office even before she had sought the explanation of the kidnaping of the runabout. And again misfortune had dogged her. Tolty had reported that Mr. Pincheon had not yet arrived. When she telephoned again, he had just gone out!

In the interim she had demanded, passionately, what had induced her father to take the car away from her. And he had answered, bewilderedly:

"But we thought that some one had come along and given you a lift into Canterbury, and that you had left mine in the road knowing that I'd soon be along to pick it up. You were nowhere in sight, you see."

"As if I could possibly have done a sloppy thing like that!" she had cried, repudiating the thought intensely. "As if I could have just gone calmly off, leaving your car sitting in the road!"

"As a matter of fact, that was exactly what you had done," her father had retorted, a trifle nettled. "You had only gone to the Hodges', to be sure, but you might as well have gone to the north pole, for all the good you were doing the car! Anyway, it would have been absolutely safe. There was no gasoline to get it away under its own power, and, besides, every one knows it. I don't believe there's a man in a radius of fifty miles that would take my car!"

He had spoken proudly. It was the reward of a life spent in the willing service of all the community. But Marjorie had gazed at him miserably, de-

spairingly, indifferent to his pride, indifferent to its justification.

Now at last she was at home again. She had parted brusquely from Eric at the station. She had hurled herself into a taxi and had clipped her good night shorter than courtesy permitted. She must get home, she must get home! She must see Asa, must see the welcoming light in his eyes—

There *must* be a welcoming light in his eyes! He must be as utterly careless as she was about all the incidents, ridiculous and maddening, of their stupid day of estrangement! Like her, he must care only for the breathless rapture of the reconciliation! He must!

Yet, after all her hurry, she stood outside the beautifully paneled door of her home afraid to slip her key into the lock, afraid to drop the ornamental knocker or to press the useful bell.

Suppose he should still be angry, impossible? Suppose he should be unreasonable? Suppose—oh, suppose!—he should choose to believe that she and Eric had met at her father's house by arrangement?

But of course he couldn't believe so silly a thing! And when she told him the truth, he would have no choice except to believe her. Of course, of course!

Her fingers shook and she could not find the key. Then suddenly she summoned her courage, her resolution. She rang the bell imperatively. She lifted her head high and fixed her lips in a bright smile of welcome.

Tolty, suave, smiling, responded.

"Well, Tolty, here I am at last. Is Mr. Pincheon at home?"

Her heart was pounding, pounding, against her ribs.

"No, ma'am, he hasn't returned yet."

"Returned?"

"Yes, ma'am. He went out to dinner. At the St. Botolph, I think, ma'am. Have you had your dinner, Mrs. Pincheon? Is there anything—"

"No, thank you, nothing at all, Tolty. I had supper with my people in Salesport, after I had had the bad luck to miss so many trains."

"Yes, ma'am."

"You gave Mr. Pincheon my messages, of course?"

"Oh, yes'm. He—he didn't say nothing, Mrs. Pincheon."

Tolty uttered the last sentence in a new voice. It was as if he had struggled for a moment to find some reassuring, pleasant, satisfactory thing to say and, fact and invention both failing him, had suddenly and rather pitifully told her bad news. She took it with her fixed little smile.

"Well, good night, Tolty."

"Lizzie's gone out, ma'am. Is there something Manda could do for you?"

"Nothing at all. Thank you just the same."

He switched on the lights in the library. He bent down and applied the match to the little fire laid ready for lighting. He moved the jar of daffodils on the big table a little forward, so that their golden bowls caught the light. He did all he could to make her comfortable, and then he noiselessly withdrew, leaving her warming her hands before the ineffectual blaze just beginning on the hearth.

If only Asa had been at home! They would have been in each other's arms by this time!

Waiting, listening, mistaking the pounding of her heart, the beating of the blood against her eardrums, for noises without the door that would herald her husband's return, she grew frightened. How was it possible that she and Asa, who loved each other so, should have reached this pass—that she could sit in panic, almost in dread of his coming? Asa, who was all that was good, all that was upright, all that was just? And who loved her, who adored her, as she adored him?

But, as she tried to argue down her

fears, they marshaled themselves before her. If Asa should not believe her! If he should think that she was deceiving him when she declared that she had had no expectation of meeting Eric at her father's house!

Her thoughts went back to the morning when she had first seen him, her shining knight, sent by Heaven to rescue them all from misery and from muddlement worse than misery. How glorious he had looked that June morning! How beautiful his horse! How his eyes had shone upon hers, and how they had belonged to each other from that bright moment!

And now she was afraid to meet his eyes; she was afraid that they would be cold to her, stern, harsh, unbelieving! How utterly absurd she was, how faithless to love itself! They were one, one beating heart, one intense, rapturously beating heart. He would know that she had not disobeyed him, had not disregarded his wishes, out of any bravado, and that only an accident had thrown her into the company of the man whom he disliked. He would understand—

A key clicked in the lock. Her breath stopped for a second. She heard him come into the hall. She heard him pause by the table where the late letters were lying. Then he came on down the hall to the library.

In a second he was bending over her. In a second she was in his arms. In a second she was sobbing hysterically: "Oh, Asa, Asa! Never let us quarrel again!"

"We must not," agreed Asa, releasing her after a tense moment and sitting down beside her on the big davenport before the fire. He still held her hands. His eyes were sunken, his face was pale. "We must not. I couldn't stand another day like this! I've been a wreck! No, quarreling doesn't pay. Oh, my dear, my dearest, I've been in hell to-day!"

"If only I could have got you on the telephone!" she lamented. "If we could only have heard each other's voices, we would have known that the quarrel was over! But you—you were awfully elusive this afternoon, Asa!"

"Elusive? I couldn't keep still two consecutive seconds! I couldn't keep my mind on what I was doing! So I kept changing my work. And then I couldn't keep my mind on the variation of it. When I finally heard from Toltz that you couldn't get home to dinner, I went around to the St. Botolph. Sometimes one meets amusing fellows there—all sorts, not merely one's friends. But not to-night! Oh, Marjorie, Marjorie, to-day has shown me what life would be without you—without your love, without perfect oneness between us! I couldn't bear it, my dear! We must never quarrel again!"

Once more his arms were around her. She was gathered close to him. Her body was relaxed against him. The strain and wretchedness of the day were over. Peace infolded her with his caress. He kissed the smoky cloud of her hair; he kissed her forehead, her eyes. And his voice, deep, convinced, kept murmuring:

"We must never quarrel again!"

Who had been right in the quarrel? Who had been wrong? What did it matter? They cared for each other, believed in each other, and would always understand each other after this. So Marjorie thought, dreamily, luxuriously, sinking back deeper into peace and love.

"How were your father and mother?" Asa asked, by and by, politely, but indifferently.

She started up. The details were to come now! Well, since they understood each other, the details would not provoke anger. Poor Asa! How worn he looked! How the stupid day of estrangement had preyed upon his very life forces, leaving him, for the mo-

ment, ravaged as if by illness or the strain of a battle! Poor, dear Asa—how cruelly hard he took things!

"Well—both of them."

Now was the time for her to lead up to the meeting with Eric. She swallowed, and told instead of Frances' deliberations on the subject of cropped hair. Asa frowned slightly.

"Too bad if she goes in for bohemianism!" he remarked, with distaste. "It's bad enough for a man. But for a woman it's impossible."

"It would only be a phase, of course," murmured Marjorie, half apologetically, half defensively. "I really believe she has a gift, Asa. I want you to read her poem."

"Not to-night, though, sweetheart. You're the only poem I want to bother with to-night."

He kissed her again. The lines of weariness and struggle began to erase themselves from beneath his eyes, from his mouth. The face he turned upon her began to glow again with the light of the young knight on horseback who had first caught her fancy, captured her heart. Ah, how blessed it was that, even yet, to look at her brought that light into his eyes! She couldn't banish it by dragging Eric into the conversation—not yet. By and by—to-morrow, perhaps. Why need she spoil the peace of their reconciliation by harping upon something which, she knew, would make her husband unhappy? He did not seem interested in the details of her flight down to Salesport and her return. He was interested only in this moment of deep joy and renewed gladness. And, since Eric had really meant no more to her day than Mrs. Hodge and the rifled Hodge premises, why irrelevantly drag him in and spoil this perfect hour?

She did not mention him. Asa did not mention him. The cause of their quarrel, it seemed tacitly agreed between them, must be ignored. Some

time, perhaps, they must return to it for a moment. Some morning—perhaps to-morrow—as Asa was leaving home, he would remark, offhandedly, casually:

"Oh, by the way, Marjy, forget anything I said the other night about Curtis. Have him in to dinner soon, won't you?"

And she would answer, equally nonchalant:

"That's lovely of you, Asa. Of course I knew you didn't really mean quite what you said. Oh, by the way, he was down at Salesport the other day."

Yes, it would arrange itself in some such fashion as this. She simply could not spoil, could not threaten, the deep satisfaction of this night by talking of Eric. It was not as if Asa would be interested! He manifestly didn't want to hear anything that he could avoid hearing about her trip home. She had taken it—that was enough. She had gone away in anger and resentment, and then loneliness and longing had driven her back to her own place, here against his heart. There had been ridiculous obstacles to her swift return—that was the whole story of her day. She would not bother him with the details—yet.

But in the middle of the night, when she wakened from deep, happy sleep to feel the warmth of her dear love's arm across her, to hear the rhythm of his breathing, to know him all her own in gladness and in trustfulness, the thought of Eric pushed itself between them. Of Eric, the poor little boy who once, thrust out of home and affection and companionship, had tried to make away with himself! Of Eric, with the irresponsible nature, the charm, the genius, the passions, the moods, and the deep indifferences! She wished suddenly that she had forced herself to talk of him the night before.

"If Asa had come home angry with me still, I could have done it," she



"Do you do this often?" Miss Lawrence demanded. "Come down to lunch with Asa, I mean? Or is this a very special occasion that I am breaking in upon?"

thought to herself. "It was only because I hated to spoil our perfect time."

She recalled that once her mother had said that more women became unprincipled and cowardly in trying "to keep the family peace" than through all the lures of joy and luxury. She dismissed the remembrance impatiently. She was not like that. And "to keep the family peace" was something very different from striving to preserve untarnished one shining, golden moment

out of a lifetime. She and Asa had reached a depth of knowledge and of understanding that night which—oh, she knew it, she knew it—was to change the face of the world for them forever. She crept closer to him. And even in the unconsciousness of slumber, he responded with a more tender pressure of his arm.

The next morning did not witness the little scene she had rehearsed to herself as affording her an opportunity for

mentioning Eric. Distinctly, to mention Eric would have been to introduce a false note. Not for weeks had the Pincheons breakfasted together so merrily. They attacked their food with the appetite of those who are young and healthy and happy-hearted. Their ardors, their intensities, of the night before were toned down to cheerful, glad acceptance of each other and of their lot. Tolty hovered over them, a benign, well-pleased, coffee-brown sort of fairy godfather. No, distinctly there was no chance to mention Eric.

"I may be able to come up home to luncheon, Marjorie," said Asa, in putting on his hat and coat. "Or are you lunching out?"

"No. And I'm not doing anything until tea time. There's a meeting of Evadne's committee at half past four in her studio. You remember that your mother's coming to-night for dinner, don't you?"

"Any one else coming?"

"Yes, that young Dalton of the *New Dial*. You remember, your mother said she wanted to meet him?"

"Oh, yes. I'd forgotten about him. I wonder what mother has up her sleeve, that she wants to meet the representatives of the press? And where did you pick him up, Marjorie?"

"He's one of Evadne's young men, don't you remember? I mean the young men she has on her string for doing odd jobs. He attends to her publicity for her for nothing."

"Don't you think you're a little hard on Evadne?"

"I didn't mean her personal publicity or her professional publicity," explained Marjorie, dimpling. "I only meant her charitable publicity. In the other ways, she is—what do the advertisers say?—advertised by her loving friends."

"She has a pretty well-trained staff, that's a fact. Well, don't run away to Salesport to-day. I'll telephone you if

I can manage lunch. Or would you rather meet me downtown for it?"

"Oh, Asa! What fun!" Marjorie was still fresh enough to city life to enjoy lunching downtown. "May I? I'll come unless I hear from you before twelve."

So they left it, and she went back from the hall door where she had taken the young-wifely traditional leave of him, and she hummed a little tune as she moved about her household tasks. How utterly absurd she had been to imagine that there were strange, unfathomable differences between her nature and her husband's, such differences as love itself could not bridge! Of course he was of another temperament, but, after all, all human beings were alike at bottom. What mountains she had made out of molehills!

On the whole, she was sorry that she had not mentioned Eric's visit to Salesport last night. It would have been all past then, any annoyance that Asa might feel. Now she had it still to face. And yet perhaps not. Her husband seemed entirely willing that yesterday be sponged from their slate. Why should she not follow his lead? Since he chose to ignore Eric's part in their disagreement, why should she not tactfully acquiesce in his silence?

The telephone on her desk kept ringing as she sat there writing notes, making out menus, balancing a check book which resolutely refused to record the same total as her bank book. Pleasant little messages they were that tinkled in across the wire, pleasant enough to keep her smiling despite the irritation of the unregenerate check book. It was a nuisance, of course, that the bank should hold her balance to be only eight dollars above the three hundred dollars limit which Asa had instructed her never to fall below, while her own was a much more prosperous sum. However, it didn't matter much. If she needed any money before the date when

her allowances were due, she would ask her husband for it. What a comfortable feeling it was, this of knowing that there would be no question about granting her request! After all, affluence was a very desirable thing. To Marjorie McDermot, it was like a warm fire, dry clothes, lights, after the cold, dark drenching of a winter storm.

The telephone rang again. She took up the receiver, and the little involuntary smile with which she answered faded as she heard the voice at the other end.

"Oh, is that you, Eric? Very well, thank you. No, not at all. Well, what is it?"

She listened attentively for a few seconds. A frown graved itself upon her forehead.

"Oh, he must have written it some time during the day. I told you that we had had a—well, a quarrel. He must have written it while he was still angry. I'm sure he'll write again to-day, apologizing. But, Eric—" She bit her lip and seemed to fumble for a word. Her color came and went. Finally she began again: "Eric, have you mentioned to any one that you were down home yesterday? Then will you please not until I tell you to? That will be to-night probably. I haven't mentioned it either, yet. But I'll have to, at once, since you say that Asa has written you like that, stopping my portrait and sending you a— Oh, Eric, I am sorry! I am ashamed!"

There were a few more words before she hung up the receiver and turned back to her correspondence. What a shame that Asa, while he was still angry with her, should have done so rude and dictatorial a thing as to write that curt note to Eric, countermanding the order for her portrait, but enclosing his check! If only he had waited until last night, the note would never have been written, the insult never offered. She was sure of it, sure. She insisted

to herself upon her certainty. Well, he would simply have to undo it all. How true it was that one should never act in bad temper! Count forty, indeed, before allowing one's self to speak when angry—and four million or so before allowing one's self to act. But now that there was peace again between her husband and herself, surely, surely, he would undo the ungracious thing!

She dressed herself for luncheon with Asa very carefully, and in clothes in which he particularly liked to see her. The cheerful mood of the morning declined to be entirely routed by Eric's communication and the feelings to which it gave rise. Everything should come all right—everything must come all right, because she, Marjorie Pincheon, demanded a cheerful, friendly, congenial world in which to live! Only demand the sort of world you want hard enough, declares unworsted youth, and you will get it.

Through all the outer offices that led toward Asa's inner sanctum, the treatment accorded Marjorie led her to believe more firmly than ever in the existence of just the kind of world she wanted to live in. It led her, also, to feel that her faith in a rose-colored lining to a hat brim and a black fox collar as part of that world was abundantly justified. Nor did the doubtful greeting of Asa's secretary when she had reached the final court before the temple, so to speak, particularly change her views.

Miss Doubleday said that Mr. Pincheon was engaged for the moment. Would Mrs. Pincheon please to sit down and wait? And would Mrs. Pincheon like her, Miss Doubleday, to say that she was here? She wasn't sure that the conference he was holding at the present moment was a business one. In fact—

But the door opened upon Miss Doubleday's uncertainties, and Asa came into the room.

"Ah, here you are, Marjorie! I just came out to leave word that you were to be sent right in. Evadne is here." He closed the door gently behind him and added in a low voice: "I've asked her to lunch with us. I said you were coming down. It's a sort of bore, but do you mind very much?"

He looked at her appealingly. There were times when his face, for all its look of the assured, ascetic aristocrat, was capable of taking on the expression of a wistful little boy's. Whenever it did, Marjorie capitulated before it.

"Of course I don't mind. That is, if you don't."

"But I do. I mind a lot. Only, there didn't seem anything else to do. She arrived at ten minutes of one. She wants me to get transportation for that consumptive about whom she's been bothering the life out of all of us all the winter—for him and his wife. To Arizona. It didn't seem as if one could do less than offer a luncheon to a woman who does so much herself for others."

"Or makes others do so much for others," commented Marjorie, discerning and a little spiteful. "Never mind, Asa. We'll have a good time, anyway. May I go in?"

Evadne was looking very handsome. She was in her favorite green, this time a very dark shade of the color. Her glorious copper hair shone startlingly beneath her close green toque. It was a very severe little toque, and it immediately had the effect of making Marjorie think a pink brim flamboyant and plebeian.

"Do you do this often?" Miss Lawrence demanded. "Come down to lunch with Asa, I mean? Or is this a very special occasion that I am breaking in upon?"

"I haven't come very often," Marjorie confessed, "and this is a very special occasion because you are going with us."

She smiled friendly as she made the pretty speech. It was her *amende honorable* for the inhospitable annoyance with which she had learned that Evadne was to be of the party.

There was a restaurant in an alley not far from Asa's office. He opined, quite rightly, that his two young women guests would prefer this place of Jacques', huddled in behind a group of newspaper offices, to any of the hotels near by. He marshaled them into the place with some little gusto. No one else lunching there had for guests two such stunning girls, and, for the moment, Asa, the aristocrat, took a common showman's pleasure in the superior attractiveness of his party.

While he ordered the meal, the women chatted, and when finally he dismissed the waiter with very particular instructions on the subject of Spanish omelet and salad, and turned to them, he was just in time to hear Evadne saying:

"You were an offender yourself last night, Marjorie. Where were you? It will be a miracle if the Sevillian play doesn't turn out a perfect laughing-stock. I've never succeeded in getting a full rehearsal yet. Last night every one was there except you and that delightful artist of yours. He, at least, had the grace to telephone me, though not until hours after he should have been there. I'm scolding Marjorie, Asa. Why do you let her play tricks with me about rehearsal? It's only ten days now before the bazaar opens."

"Asa isn't the keeper of my engagement book, Evadne," Marjorie struck in, a trifle nervously. She felt that her face was flaming beneath the rose-colored brim. It had begun to burn the instant Eric's delinquencies had been mentioned. Oh, why had she not told Asa last night that Eric also had been in Salesport? What a mistake ever to defer an unpleasant duty to a more opportune time! There were no oppor-

tune times for unpleasant duties, and how Asa was looking at her, with what stern question in his eyes! It was perfectly absurd, that expression! She was not a child to be catechized and commanded! And what was that Evadne was saying?

"Oh, don't be ridiculous, Asa dear. You don't mind my calling your husband 'dear,' do you, Marjorie? He's a sort of cousin, you know——"

"Call him what you please," said Marjorie, almost too eagerly. "Even if I objected to it, which I certainly don't, I shouldn't dream of trying to interfere with any of his relationships."

Evadne favored her with a stare.

"My dear child! What a serious lecture in reply to a very frivolous little question! But to go back to our charming artist, Asa. Of course, I haven't eliminated him from my list because of that ridiculous jeweler affair. In the first place, he's been awfully kind and awfully useful about the bazaar. In the second place, he's the fashion this winter. In the third place, what are his bills or his love affairs to me or to you? And, finally and most important, what does the whole thing matter, anyway? People of his class—the semi-bohemian, I mean—are so ephemeral that it seems to me as foolish to take 'a stand,' as you call it, against them, as it would be to take a stand against a dragon fly. Don't you agree with me, Marjorie? Don't you think that Asa is really a little stuffy? Do tell him that the male Mrs. Grundy is the most deplorable and grotesque figure in the whole world!"

She said it all with the air of the most good-humored, sophisticated banter. But Asa's brow was black and Marjorie's cheeks were flaming at the end of it. Marjorie managed to speak first.

"As Eric is such an old friend of ours—of my own family's, I mean—you can't wonder that I don't regard him as one of the ephemera," she said.

"I didn't mean anything derogatory," said Evadne plaintively. "Ephemera are so much more delightful than—the pyramids and stable things like that."

"Of course," declared Asa heavily, "it's the business of you women to make your own social regulations. Society is your game, your field. It isn't ours. But, upon my word, if you're going to write an entirely new code that takes in every agreeable rascal and wastrel with a serviceable parlor trick, I think perhaps we men shall have to come in and at least do a little policing for you."

"Asa!" It was Marjorie who uttered the exclamation in an outraged tone. But it was Evadne who saved the situation.

"I am a blunderer!" she cried contritely. "You'll never forgive me, Marjorie, or let me lunch with you again! Here I must needs go and stir up a hornet's nest the very first minute, by scolding you because you didn't come to rehearsal last night, and because Mr. Curtis didn't. If I had only confined myself to scolding you for your own sins, instead of trying to make you responsible for Mr. Curtis', too, I shouldn't have given Asa a chance to mount his favorite hobby!"

And then, the waiter arriving with a covered dish which he uncovered in the manner of a magician performing a great feat of legerdemain, and Monsieur Jacques himself attending to receive the plaudits of his guests upon this particular work of art, the further discussion of Eric Curtis and his failure to attend the rehearsal of the night before was deferred. Marjorie, as she ate tasteless morsel after tasteless morsel and wondered why they did not choke her, knew that, now, she would never tell that Eric had been her companion on the afternoon before. Perhaps it would come out some time, and perhaps Asa would be angry. Indeed, there was little doubt that Asa would be angry. But, through cowardice,



His voice changed, and he looked in genuine consternation at Marjorie, who, clutching the table edge with her fingers, leaned back in her chair, her face, even her lips, whiter than the white frock that she wore.

Edward L. Caswell

through the desire not to mar her own happiness for a longer hour, she had suppressed the truth the night before. And that brief yielding to cowardice, she found, had made her its slave. Sometimes before in her life she had failed to speak the whole truth; she had done it out of kindness, out of the desire not to wound another, out of any one of a dozen good reasons. A little lie was not a deadly sin in the McDer-

mot code if it contributed to the comfort of life. But never before had she been silent chiefly from the desire to preserve her own happiness.

Incoherently struggling in her mind were many thoughts and impulses. Asa was wrong, Asa was unjust in his judgments. He was wrong and unjust in his determination to rule her life. She knew herself justified in her resentment of it. If only she had had the courage

to drag in at the proper moment the name of the man he so unreasonably hated, she would have felt that she had a clear case against him. But that brief suppression of the truth, that brief yielding to panic, had in some mysterious way placed her in a new position toward him. She no longer came into the intangible court where they debated their case with hands quite clean.

CHAPTER XII.

"How do you do, Mrs. Pincheon? Come close to the fire. It's grown chilly again, hasn't it, this afternoon? Asa will be out in a few minutes. He was a little late getting home from the office. What a beautiful color your frock is! A new color, isn't it? What do they call it?"

Thus Marjorie to her mother-in-law, when that magnificent lady was ushered into the drawing-room before dinner. Marjorie herself was very sweet and girlish in something white and lacy.

"Thank you, my dear, I'll sit here. When you arrive at my years, you won't risk scorching your face by fire any more than by sun. It is rather a gorgeous color, isn't it? Persimmon, Clothilde called it. I got it from her, the robber! The name is newer than the shade, I think. It's nothing but old-fashioned orange with a dash of red. A perfectly impossible shade for any one except a perfect Spanish beauty of twenty-two, with an ivory skin and mysterious eyes. Very daring of me to wear it, isn't it? But what little there is of the bodice is honiton and that saves my face! Where's our young man, our Mr. Dalton? Surely he hasn't begun to give himself airs and keep us waiting. Ah, Asa, my dear, how are you?"

Asa stooped and kissed her cool, firm cheek dutifully.

"You were asking about Dalton," he said. "Isn't he a little late, Marjorie? What time is dinner?"

"Half past seven. Your mother is going on somewhere from here. All this splendor wasn't just for us," said Marjorie, laughing. "So we're having early dinner. I dare say Mr. Dalton will be along soon. We'll wait only ten minutes. I think that's long enough. He's nothing but a kid."

"What do you want to do with him, mother?" asked Asa.

"I want to make him generally useful. It's a trick I'm learning from Evadne, this keeping of a tame reporter or two. I wasn't able to get a line into any of the papers about our day nursery Christmas sale. Other people manage it. So I'm going to try it. And every one tells me that this young man is very presentable. I think he brought a note to me when he first came here from St. Louis, or wherever it was he came from. But I never happened to be at home when he called. I don't believe he'll be so very serviceable if this is the way he keeps his engagements. A quarter of eight, isn't it?"

"Beg pardon, ma'am," said Toltz, appearing at the door, "but a telephone message from Mr. Dalton says, please not to wait for him. He'll be here very shortly, but was detained on important business." Toltz rolled the words under his tongue with relish; he loved important business, and dramatized the very mention of it.

Marjorie thanked him and suggested that they take Mr. Dalton at his word. They were seated around the table and had progressed as far as fish when the young man made his breezy entrance. He was apologetic, but by no means abjectly so. It was obvious that he felt he had that to bestow which amply compensated for his delay in arriving.

"It's rather a ghastly story," he began. "Not exactly suited to a dinner table like this." His bright, appraising blue eyes gave swift approval to Marjorie's crystal and roses and candles, and to the pleasant room beyond, of

which these formed the focus point of light. "But may I tell it? You'll understand then how I couldn't help being late."

"Of course. Exciting gossip is more stimulating than a cocktail."

"You've all seen Madame Médore, of course?" He waited for no further permission to introduce his tale.

They all murmured that they had seen her. But Marjorie, under the sudden flash of Asa's eyes upon her, felt her heart grow cold. Was there some sequel to the jeweler's suit which would again drag Eric into the limelight of undesirable publicity?

"Well, she's been living at the Fontaine ever since her engagement closed in this city. That was the reason the newspapers weren't onto the story earlier; the hotel management kept it dark as long as it could. Until she was moved——"

"Moved?" faltered Marjorie.

"Yes, the body. And that wasn't until this afternoon. I don't know how the hotel succeeded in pulling that off. There'll be a little investigation later. Some tale about trying to reach her manager, who was in New York, and who was her nearest of kin, so to speak, in this country. But certainly there were twelve good hours between the discovery of the murder——"

"Murder!" cried the three auditors in a breath.

Mr. Dalton, enjoying himself immensely, looked from one to another with his shrewd, bright eyes and nodded a brilliantly red head several times.

"Yes, the murder of Madame Médore. Good Lord!" His voice changed, and he looked in genuine consternation at Marjorie, who, clutching the table edge with her fingers, leaned back in her chair, her face, even her lips, whiter than the white frock that she wore. "What a brute I am! I've startled Mrs. Pincheon abominably!"

"It's nothing. That is, I don't know why I should feel particularly overcome," said Marjorie, summoning all her forces.

"Tolty, fill Mrs. Pincheon's glass," commanded Asa, and Marjorie drank a great gulp of wine.

"Of course almost everybody had met her," said young Dalton, still a little dismayed.

"Yes, almost everybody had met her this winter," said Mrs. Pincheon. "I disapprove of that sort of thing myself. An incident like this goes to show that I'm right. You never know what that sort of person is likely to do."

"I don't suppose, from what Mr. Dalton says," said Marjorie, with the ghost of a smile, "that Madame Médore was herself responsible for the sort of thing that has happened to her. Mr. Dalton said she was murdered, I think?"

"Yes," returned young Dalton eagerly, the zest of the reporter for a thrilling situation overcoming the compunctions of a guest. "I did say that she had been murdered, but from the appearances, she had a good deal to do with it herself. Indirectly, of course. It looks very much as if one of her lovers—— I beg your pardon, Mrs. Pincheon, but I guess there's no denying she had them——"

"My dear young man, I've lived for fifty-five years in the world, and I should be more shocked to learn of a French actress who didn't have them than of one who did. Don't apologize to me. Is it thought that one of her lovers killed her?"

"Yes." He paused to give added effect to his next announcement. "The revolver that was lying near her with one chamber exploded was"——he paused again, and his astute young eyes looked from one to another of them, finally coming to rest upon his hostess—"that of Mr. Eric Curtis, the artist whose name has been coupled with hers."

"How perfectly ridiculous!" It was

Marjorie who spoke first. This time, before a tangible horror, she did not lose her self-possession. "Fancy Eric's ever shooting any one! More especially any one of whom he was fond, as he seems to have been of Madame Médoire. Mr. Curtis," she added, turning her eyes full upon her guest, "is an old friend of my family's. You cannot imagine how mad such a charge sounds to any one who ever knew him!"

"Certainly it does sound a little too melodramatic for Curtis," said Asa woodenly. "What makes them think it was Curtis' gun?"

"It happens to have a silver name plate on it engraved with his name. He doesn't deny that it is his gun," he added nonchalantly.

"Oh, is he in custody?" It was the elder Mrs. Pincheon that spoke.

"Yes. That's why I'm so late. Through the hotel's delay in notifying the authorities and their slowness in acting, Curtis wasn't taken until this afternoon. He wasn't at his own place until five o'clock. That was when they nabbed him. I had to try and get a statement from him. He might have made good his escape."

"Might have made good his escape! But what nonsense, Mr. Dalton! Why should he try to make good his escape from something he knew no more about than you or I or any of us? And he wasn't trying to escape, was he?" Marjorie spoke indignantly.

"Besides, I should say," Asa struck in, "that if a man of Curtis' intelligence wanted to commit a murder, he would scarcely take his own revolver and leave it lying by his victim's side."

"I agree with you both," said young Dalton with an engaging air of frankness. "The police in this city are absolute boneheads, but they had to make an arrest. They had to make it all the more because of the delay in discovering the crime or in doing anything about it. He'll be out on bail before midnight.

He's being held as a material witness—that's the alias for a suspect whom they haven't got the goods on. Of course, if he had done it, he wouldn't have left his calling card, so to speak, beside the victim—unless he thought it would be favorable evidence—as it is! And I dare say he wouldn't have wasted twenty-four good hours in which he might have escaped. He absolutely declined to talk. But, of course, it's a wonderful story for the first edition—two of the bohemian pets of society—whew! It's a peach of a story, all right!"

"When do they think that the lady was murdered?" asked Asa.

"It must have been some time between four o'clock in the afternoon, when she was seen by some of the hotel servants, and nine or ten. The murder was discovered about one o'clock in the morning, and the doctors agree that the crime must have been committed about five hours previously. That would make it about eight o'clock. It could not have been later than nine."

"Not later than nine!" Marjorie's voice rang out clear and excited. "Then that clears Eric. We didn't get in from Salesport until ten-thirteen."

"You didn't get in from Salesport until ten-thirteen?" repeated Mrs. Pincheon wonderingly.

"So Curtis was at Salesport yesterday," said Asa, looking at his wife.

"This is most interesting, Mrs. Pincheon!" cried young Dalton. "Were you somewhere where Curtis was yesterday between four and nine o'clock?"

"Dalton, are you here as a reporter or as our guest?" cried Asa abruptly.

"Absolutely as your guest," replied young Dalton. "But of course Mrs. Pincheon will wish to lay any information for the release of Curtis before the proper authorities. I won't use a word of it in the *Dial* unless you give me permission. But she herself will want to make a statement to the district attorney's office, of course."

"Of course," echoed Marjorie. "Asa, will you call up the proper people and tell them that Eric was at Salesport yesterday? From between two and three in the afternoon until we caught that wretched nine-thirty back to town? I dare say he has told them so already. A million people—well, anyway, a score of people—can confirm it. I'm one of them. He was at my father's house. He came back on the same train with me."

"I'll go telephone, if you'll excuse me," said Asa.

Across the delicate lights, shining behind their screens of silk, across the yellow roses in the silver bowl, the bonbons in the silver dishes, the yellow wine in the long-stemmed glasses, his eyes burned with angry accusations upon his wife.

She met his gaze fearlessly. A little while ago, she had been a coward, desiring to spare him pain, desiring to keep him amiable, more than she desired to be outspoken and free. But that had been a few hours ago. Now something had happened big enough to push both of them into the background, with their exacting love, their misunderstandings, their possessive jealousies, and all the rest of it. She had responded to the greater call. She was not afraid to meet his eyes. She could almost smile at him. Poor Asa! Poor, dear Asa!

He would be angry for a little while of course. She deserved that. She had placed him at a disadvantage before the world. She had behaved like a child, conscious of wrongdoing, a child with foolish, futile concealments, instead of like a woman, honest and unafraid, conscious of no wrongdoing. Yes, she deserved that he should be angry with her for a little while. It hurt his dignity, before this guest avid for paragraphs, to have it shown that he had been in ignorance of all her doings and companions yesterday. It would have been

better, oh, much better—she admitted it fully—had he been able to say:

"But that is perfectly impossible, of course! My wife met Curtis at her father's house in Salesport yesterday, and traveled up to town with him on a train that did not get in until after ten."

Yes, that would have been much better, much more consonant with Asa's sense of his own position; and, alas, much less piquing to the professional curiosity of this youth who was eying her now with such lively interest! What would the papers say in the morning?

But, after all, these were trifling considerations. The great thing was that by a word she was able to free Eric at once from a charge whose horror had been eclipsed by its sheer grotesqueness.

While Asa was absent at the telephone, young Dalton ran on with his story. Madame Médore, it appeared, had lunched in the public dining room with a group of friends. She had not risen from the table until after three o'clock. None of them, the management of the Fontaine was quite sure, had accompanied her to her apartments. In passing, the reporter gave a brief description of these—a princely suite, he declared it to be, all pale gray and pale blue and gilt, all sunshine and flowers. There was a baby grand piano, gilded and overlaid with wreaths and fat-faced cupids; there was a bed covered with wonderful lace and embroidery; there was gold and enamel to the tune of thousands of dollars upon her dressing table. Bad seasons were not allowed to interfere, Mr. Dalton hazarded the opinion, with Madame Médore's standard of what an eminent French actress should have in the way of personal comforts.

She had ordered a car for an afternoon drive, but about half past three she had countermanded the order. At four o'clock, she had taken from the hands of one of the hotel boys a box

of flowers which he described, cheerfully, as being the size of a young coffin; the hour and the incident were both impressed upon his mind—the latter by the fact that Madame Médore had tipped him with a silver dollar, the former by the fact that the delivery of the flowers was his last task before leaving the hotel, his shift being over at four o'clock.

The maid stationed in the corridor corroborated him as to the identity of the person receiving the flowers. Moreover, she bore witness to the fact that the actress' long-suffering maid, or companion, was off duty that afternoon, and had announced her intention of visiting relatives living out at Natick. The hall maid had also declared that no one had reached Médore's apartment from the hall all the time she was on duty.

It was the actress' own attendant who, returning about midnight, had slipped on the threshold of the apartment, just inside the door. Looking down to discover the reason of the strange slipperiness, she observed that the light-colored hardwood floor was darkened by a little pool of sluggish, deep-red liquid. The light she had switched on in the private corridor of madame's apartment had shown her this. Horrified, she had rushed into the main hall again, and had summoned the night maid, who was half dozing at her table at its end. Together the two had gone back to the apartment and at the door of madame's luxurious, glittering bedroom, they had found her fallen, her little black head across the lintel of the door into the hall.

Asa came back from the telephone before young Dalton had finished the story.

"It's all right," he said curtly. "The information wasn't even necessary. Curtis has been released from custody. Your friends, the bonehead police"—he turned toward Dalton—"have caught

the real murderer. No great credit to them, at that, for the gentleman was as jealous of his credit in the matter as madame herself would have been for hers in a leading part. A Sicilian, I believe. A former lover. She found him concealed in the apartment some time in the afternoon and, it seems, she tried to hold him off with Curtis' revolver. She had begged the weapon from him—had told him she was being watched and followed. Curtis, naturally, thought she was laboring under some melodramatic delusion. But he lent her the thing. The other fellow has given himself up, and confessed. As I said, he wanted all the credit."

"A horrible, messy story!" commented Mrs. Pincheon with strong distaste. "I hope it'll bring some people to their senses about the entertainment of all sorts of artistic riffraff. However, of course I'm glad that your friend, my dear"—she turned patronizingly toward Marjorie—"got off as lightly as he did. One can't play the moth to these candles without being singed at least. He's lucky not to have been burned alive. Let's hope it will be a warning to him."

"I'm sure I hope it will," answered Marjorie, a little dully.

Asa's voice, as he had delivered his tidings, had struck cold upon her heart. There was no generous rejoicing in it. A friend, an acquaintance at least, had been plucked out of danger and disgrace, and all that he, her husband, felt was a sharp, acid dislike for the fact that he himself had been briefly and indirectly linked with the affair. He did not care for tales of *crime passionnel* if they were of a later date than the sixteenth century or of a closer neighborhood than Verona. She read all his disgust, all his deep irritation, at this unseemliness which she had been the means of dragging into his orderly existence. And she read more than that in his voice and his cold, level looks.

He was going to make another scene for her—he who, paradoxically, so detested scenes!

Somehow the guests were gotten rid of. Mrs. Pincheon, going on to the next of her evening's festivities, already forgetful of the tale that had garnished her dinner, offered to set Mr. Dalton down at the office to which he was palpably panting to return. Pre-occupied as she was, Marjorie could not repress a wonder as to which of the two would gain the more from the drive. She was inclined to back the young reporter, and, thinking of the day nursery, she half smiled.

Asa had accompanied his mother to the elevator. She heard him come back into the hall, heard the door close behind him. She went out to meet him. She was done with delays, with reticences, with all cowardice. Whatever had to be met, let her go forth to meet it.

"Asa," she began, "I'm ashamed that I didn't tell you at once about running into Eric down at Salesport. I ought to have done it. But it seemed such a little thing compared with our—with our making up yesterday that I—that I—oh, I didn't want to spoil things!"

They had gone into the library, the scene of so much happiness. He looked down upon her, and she met his gaze unflinchingly. She kept telling herself that she deserved a bad quarter of an hour and that she would take it uncomplainingly.

"You see, I hope," began Asa, his voice shaken by a restrained passion, "what your headstrong folly, your total disregard of my wishes, has brought about! Every day has proved my instinct about that man more right than the day before. But you have persisted in your acquaintance with him—friendship, affection, love—I don't know what you may call it! At any rate, he seems to have rights in your life which you value more than mine. To-morrow

your name—my name!—will be in the papers in connection with this loathsome story of a French prostitute! It will be pointed out that the testimony of my wife—of my wife, of Asa Pincheon's wife!—released this light-o'-love, Curtis, from a cell! Oh, I grant you it won't be true! I grant you that he was already released! But that will not make such interesting reading as that Mrs. Asa Pincheon came forward to say that her friend, Eric Curtis, could not have murdered his mistress, because, forsooth, he was taking a holiday fifty miles away from that lady and was making love to Asa Pincheon's wife instead!"

"Asa!"

"It doesn't sound pretty, does it? But that is what they will say, the papers. And, by Heaven, I believe they will say the truth! After I had told you my objection to this disreputable fellow, your very first act is to run away from your home and to meet him, to spend hours with him, to break all your engagements for him, to fail to return to me because you were with him! I don't think the papers will be so far wrong in what they will insinuate."

He waited then. He looked at her, with who knows what hope of miracle in his heart. He had put the thing as brutally as he could, hoping somehow to hurt her as he himself had been hurt. And with some hope, too, that her denial would be of such vehemence, such horror, that it would carry conviction to him, a salve for all his wounds. But she looked at him with eyes colder than he had ever dreamed Marjorie's brook-brown eyes could be.

"You are mad, I think," she said. "You are beside yourself with insane jealousy. But I will not bear it! I will not overlook it! I will not stay another night under your roof! I am going away, and I shall never come back until you have cleansed your mind of its foulness!"

"My mind! My mind of its foulness! And you a friend of Curtis'! It becomes you to be choice!"

"Don't talk about him! You can't understand him! You can't understand any one who is impulsive, who is generous! Oh, I must have been mad when I thought that you were the embodiment of everything fine and high! You, who dare to say such things, to think such things! About me—about your wife—about the woman who— Oh, it's loathsome! I am going away. I tell you, I mean it! I'm going home! I'm going somewhere where the air isn't polluted with vile suspicions!"

"Do you suppose," said Asa elaborately, "that you will find Curtis waiting for you again when you go home, as you call it?"

She did not answer him in words, but marched by him, head up, eyes coldly brilliant, mouth set—a Marjorie whom he had not seen before. She went to her room, and he waited as one waits for the recurring thunderclaps in a storm. In a few minutes it came. She returned to the library. She was dressed for the street, and she carried a bag in her hand. Her face, though, was no longer a rigid mask of rage.

"Asa," she said, almost gently, "I'm going away. I think we are both too upset to talk rationally. I know that I am. It will be better for us to be apart for a little bit—"

At that evidence of weakening, his heart leaped exultingly. He need only stand his ground, need only be firm and stern enough with her, and she

would yield entirely to his wishes. The miracle would happen. He would know her wholly his own. If he had obeyed that foolish impulse that he had a few minutes ago and had followed her abjectly to her room, would she be speaking now in this new, reasonable, almost pleading way? No, decidedly no. He must be firm with her.

"If you go out of my house tonight," he told her, "you may stay out of it forever. If you go back to your father's at this crisis in our affairs, you may stay there. Understand me. I shall take your leaving our house tonight as a final step, and I shall act accordingly."

At that the little look of relenting was wiped from her face. Anger, the stark, unmixed anger of outraged youth, settled upon her again. She said nothing more, but walked down the hall and out of the door. In a minute, he heard the sound of the elevator stopping for her. He waited a little while, still standing, still-listening. Of course she would come back!

But the minutes passed into hours and she did not return. And in her place came all the little devils that attend upon the archdevil of jealousy—pride and aching loneliness, torturing desire and black suspicion, hatred and yearning; all these bore him company. And because he was Asa Pincheon and knew himself for an upright, just man, a clean man, a gentleman, he harbored all the little devils. For they told him that he was right and that he must not yield to the mere emptiness of his arms, the tortured emptiness of his heart.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE DECEMBER NUMBER.



Intestinal Sluggishness

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

EVERY one will concede that no actual beauty can develop where intestinal sluggishness exists. The condition sets up a state of auto-intoxication, more or less pronounced, in accordance with the degree of sluggishness to which a given individual is subject. The intestinal canal may merely act feebly, retarding the progress of its contents, but, after some delay, functioning without assistance, or a chronic constipated habit may be the rule, necessitating the routine use of laxatives or purgatives. In a recent issue of a medical journal, the statement is made that this is "a constipated age."

Are we as sturdy and beautiful a race of people as our forebears?

Constipation is much more common to-day than in any other period, at least of medical history. Of course it has always existed among human beings more or less, but to-day it is more. Constipation has, indeed, become a serious problem as the number of sufferers from this trouble increases. It is as much a malady to be painstakingly studied as to individual needs and peculiarities as is the condition known as "neurasthenia," in which there is a multiplicity of symptoms, but in which the *patient* and not the symptoms should be treated. Chronic constipation is one of the most obstinate of

disturbances, and one that lies at the root of so many disorders that it constitutes a serious handicap in our quest for health and beauty. It is a perpetual menace, not only to health, but to recovery from any illness whatsoever. Later on in life, when all the functions of the body are performed at a lowered pace, when it becomes, indeed, impossible to "speed up" the activity of any organ without disastrous results, a state of chronic sluggishness of the bowels sometimes forms an inseparable barrier to returning health or to recovery from an erstwhile benign disease. The condition of bowel torpidity into which some individuals permit themselves to degenerate, and yet consider themselves comparatively well, is a constant source of wonder to physicians. At no time do they experience actual physical comfort—at no time; while the beauty defects under which victims of chronic constipation labor often cause genuine unhappiness, and may, indeed, interfere seriously with one's hopes and advancement in life. Who can be attractive with an unpleasant breath, with odorous perspiration, with a discolored skin, with heavy, dull eyes, with the sluggish mind and attitude that so often accompany this disorder when it is of long standing?

It has been conclusively shown again and again that torpor of the bowels

"kicks back" at an otherwise healthy digestive organism and infects the upper portion of the tract with manifold poisons which are constantly being generated in the lower portion by the action of countless bacteria upon putrefactive food. Costiveness is becoming as much a habit with men as with women, and the reason for this seems to lie in the greater luxury of latter-day living methods as compared to former ages. So-called civilization has not only resulted in a greater refinement of daily foodstuffs, in ready means of communication by telephone, wire, and conveyances, making physical exertion, especially walking, unnecessary, but has increased our æsthetic needs, so that we prefer to loll in a warm bath for ten minutes—whereby the already over-relaxed tissues are still further softened, enervated, and debilitated—instead of resorting to cold, bracing rub-downs, or cleansing the body by means of dry friction and open-air ventilation. Modern dietetics has much to do with this trouble, undoubtedly, but modern luxuries, and especially "all the modern conveniences," much more. If we could go back to first principles, and live more or less primitively, we should suffer less, far less, from this universal menace, which makes life uncomfortable and seriously shortens our days.

No person can be said to enjoy the best of health if the intestinal tract is incapable of emptying itself at stated intervals with the same involuntary precision that marks the beating of a normal heart. One may have a damaged heart, and apparently attend to everyday affairs, but nothing of an untoward nature fails to take its toll from the weak spot in the body, so that the damaged heart is always a handicap and in the last analysis constitutes a grave complication, if not the main factor, in the closing chapter of life. So it is with any function that is inter-

fered with, that is performed in a hazardous manner. And there is this to be added in cases of torpor of the bowels—there is an absorption of noxious odors and toxins into the circulation, which poison the system.

If a condition of this kind were to come on suddenly, like an acute fever, and the retained putrefactive matter poured into the blood without any previous warning, it is safe to say that the system would be so overwhelmed with the virulence of the toxins that a serious illness, if not death, would result. Indeed, we frequently see this in ptomaine and leucomain poisoning, in acute intestinal indigestion, and allied disorders. It is precisely the same thing, except that, in such instances, the attacks are induced by a sudden and overwhelming dose of poisonous food, whereas, in chronic constipation, the system is being slowly accustomed to the same thing by a gradual inoculation—absorption—of effete matter. The body is very tolerant and puts up with endless abuses over a long period of time—but in the last analysis, it takes its revenge!

Now we are wont to regard chronic constipation with utter disregard, as a condition of no serious moment, but very annoying, which must be reckoned with now and then when Nature cries out too insistently to be longer ignored. Parents are guilty of this same conduct in the matter with their children, in whom often an obstinate condition of this kind exists. Many letters come to this department from mothers seeking *beauty* advice for their little girls, and incidentally stating that the child is chronically costive!

It is quite true that a state of intestinal sluggishness may be carried into adult years from childhood, indeed from birth. By this is not meant some congenital abnormality of the intestinal tract whereby food is prevented from passing along the canal, but a constitu-

tional weakness of the bowel musculature, resulting in a constipated state. This weakness may be inherited, for it obtains in some families, especially in members of a family of similar—"bilious"—temperaments and dark complexions; those of a fair complexion may not be so markedly affected. The frequent purgation to which little ones with this tendency are subjected increases the disorder. Lifelong impairment of natural peristalsis may, and often does, result. The food of children, like that of adults, may have no stimulating effect upon the mucous membranes of the intestinal walls, and instead of being propelled along the tract, be retained.

Many little ones cannot digest fats—that is, the fats in milk; such fats as cod-liver oil do not have the same effect. These children require less milk, or skimmed milk, cod-liver oil or olive oil, and foods that contain fibrous matter. Eggs are advised for children without discrimination, yet should be entirely eliminated from the diet of those of this habit, and a larger amount of vegetables and coarser cereals should be added. The bulk of the food should consist of oatmeal porridge—not strained—sweetened with cane sugar and thinned with milk. This, with vegetables containing a large amount of cellulose—such as spinach, celery, baked potato—with plenty of butter, a small quantity of beef, lamb, or chicken, and fruit—preferably stewed prunes, stewed figs, apple sauce, baked apple—should form the diet.

When the constipated habit is very resistant, an agar biscuit should be given daily—Health Biscuits—and wheat gluten or glycerin suppositories occasionally resorted to in place of enemas. To establish regular habits and train the peristaltic action of an atonic bowel requires great patience, time, and thought, but it means *health and beauty*.

The large intestine is without doubt a menace to beauty unless its functions are being performed in an absolutely healthy manner, and when this is not the case, it becomes such a disturbing factor that its extirpation has been advised on general principles. Indeed, many scientists of great fame believe the large intestine to be a comparatively useless appendage and a continual menace to health and long life.

At the junction of the ascending colon and the small intestine lies the *cæcum*, or blind pouch, from which trails the vermiform appendix. Concretions are sometimes found in the *cæcum*, although it is fortified with a valve, which prevents the contents of the intestine from slipping back or from entering this pouch. Some surgeons bear the vermiform appendix great animosity and advise its extirpation in every case of abdominal trouble that necessitates an operation. No matter what the nature of this trouble may be, if the abdomen is open, remove the appendix, healthy or diseased, and so spare the patient any possible future mischief that might arise from this pestiferous little structure! Now no one is altogether certain that this portion of the large intestine is a rudimentary organ, while every one will concede that its removal frequently results in a condition of altered health quite unaccountable upon any hypothesis whatsoever. A sufficient number of such cases have been observed and studied to warrant the belief that, far from being rudimentary, the appendix has a distinct function to perform and that it may secrete a fluid analogous to that of the ductless glands and have much to do with the proper functioning power of the large intestine. Of course, when diseased and a menace to life or health, it should be removed.

Although *bile* is poured into the small

intestine, where it has a multiform action not only on food, but on peristalsis, it also affects the function of the large intestine by stimulating the secretion of *succus entericus*, as the fluid secreted by the glands in this portion of the intestine is called. *Succus entericus* is an important thing to remember in our consideration of constipation and of the function of the lower intestine. Scientists held *succus entericus* in little regard until laboratory investigation proved that it is essential to the flow of bile and pancreatic fluid; also, that actual digestion occurs in the large intestine. All food is by no means thoroughly digested in the small intestine, nor is it all absorbed there. Digestion and absorption continue.

What the great digestive organs leave undone or fail to do, the large intestine takes up and completes. When its function is interfered with, large quantities of undigested food pass out of the body without having contributed a particle of nourishment to the system.

Only such cases of costiveness—or, when further advanced, chronic constipation—as have no underlying diseased condition should be treated without the guidance of a physician. When tenderness upon abdominal pressure exists, or when pain is experienced, a physician should be consulted. Now the treatment to be pursued in overcoming an obstinate bowel is first of all the forming of good *habits*; train the intestines to perform this function normally, as nature intended, at a stipulated hour. Select this hour and allow nothing to interfere. Liquefaction of the intestinal contents may safely come next; six glasses of fresh water, or, when possible, a slightly carbonated table water, should be consumed within every twenty-four hours. The character of food is so important that one would like to give it first place, but without a good *habit*, and without

liquefaction, the nature of food alone would prove ineffective. Some persons do not eat enough; others do not eat correct foods; others do not chew their food sufficiently, leaving large masses of undigested matter to putrefy and clog the canal.

The dietary of one eager to make over a sluggish bowel should contain considerable *waste*—not waste food, but those portions of foods that we usually regard as waste, as, for instance, the peelings of potatoes and fruits and the fibrous or woody elements of vegetables. The best part of a baked potato is usually thrown away as waste; the mineral constituents reside in and immediately under the skin. Therefore, the whole potato, jacket and all, should be eaten; baked, it is more acceptable than in any other form. If slightly burned, the charcoal acts as a cleanser and deodorizer. Vegetables should be steamed, as boiling deprives them of much valuable mineral matter. Of these, cabbage, cucumbers, green salads, peas, string beans, turnips, spinach, kale, kohlrabi, and many other greens and tubers of a fibrous nature make up a bulk or residue that stimulates the peristaltic action of the bowel. Foods that are useful in constipation on account of their rich content of acid and salts include raw and cooked fruit, figs, prunes, raisins, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, grapes, plums, peaches, apples, and pears. Figs and raisins are especially recommended; also, fruit juices, lemonade, cider, and fruit wines. The carbonates give up a large amount of carbonic acid, which is helpful. Fats facilitate the action by lubrication, so that oil, butter, and cream are included in this list. Then some substance must be employed that act merely as mechanical irritants; of these bran and fermented milk cannot be too strongly recommended. At least a cup of bran should be taken every day, divided between the meals, stirred

in water, mixed with fruit, or chewed and insalivated; it is optional how it is taken, so that a given amount, not less than a cupful, is consumed in the course of each day.

To those whose complexions are suffering as a result of *copramia*—the absorption of poisons from retained fecal matter—let it be said that nothing will act upon it more gratifyingly than bran, used inside as stated here, and outside for cleansing purposes. Fermented or soured milk is laxative; it also neutralizes putrefactive matter and so constitutes a valuable article of diet in this condition.

Some foods must be forbidden. These are *tea*, red wine, huckleberries, cocoa, and chocolate, and sage, farina, and rice; the former contain tannic acid, the latter become mucilaginous in the intestines and so hinder its action. So much for foods. If a complete list of these is made and included in the daily dietary—never neglecting bran, fermented or soured milk, and fruits—a tremendous step toward a cure will have been made.

Exercise is an important factor in overcoming this trouble. Purposeful walking and deep breathing are essential. Now many who indulge in out-of-door sports, such as tennis, golf, and so on, continue constipated. The exercise must be systematically carried out with the avowed purpose of assisting the function we are eager to stimulate. The *mind*—mental concentration—must be brought into play here as elsewhere, to get the best results. In out-of-door sports, the mind is on the game, not on the intestinal tract. Two miles of purposeful walking, accompanied by diaphragmatic breathing, will give this tract mechanical massage as well. The diaphragm is a powerful

muscle and imparts tremendous force to the entire digestive tract. Massage of the abdomen—lying flat, to relax the tissues—is good treatment *when no tenderness exists*; also, practicing bicycle movements while in the same position—flat on the back—stimulates the abdominal contents and strengthens the abdominal muscles. Weak, flaccid abdominal muscles are a decided deterrent to active peristalsis.

A home exercise of superlative value in this connection is the following: With the feet braced by a heavy piece of furniture and the arms folded upon the chest, the trunk is slowly raised from the recumbent to the sitting position. The entire abdominal musculature, both voluntary and involuntary, is thereby strengthened and stimulated. Perform for ten minutes twice daily.

Now when all these measures fail to establish a normal condition, we must add a laxative for a while, to assist nature until she can continue without help. The character of a laxative depends on individual peculiarities, but it has been found that a combination which includes cascara sagrada and agar-agar, three teaspoonfuls to two tablespoonfuls in apple sauce or mashed potatoes, is of considerable value. No water should be taken right after using this preparation. It may be continued from six to eight weeks, with a gradual reduction in the daily quantity. Some prefer mineral waters, of which there are many. Bitter waters should not be used by run-down and markedly anæmic persons, as they reduce fat and check the deposit of new fat.

While mineral waters are highly efficacious in promoting peristalsis, they are depleting and must not be depended upon permanently, but should be used simply as temporary aids.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Draftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> CIVIL SERVICE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Builder | <input type="checkbox"/> Rail way Mail Clerk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> AUTOMOBILE OPERATING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLUMBING AND HEATING | <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Repairing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxicab |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Overseer or Supv. | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHEMIST | <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry Raising <input type="checkbox"/> French |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian |

Name _____
Present _____
Occupation _____
Street _____
and No. _____
City _____ State _____

Infantile Paralysis

These two letters and the photographs evidence the satisfactory results from treatment received at this Sanitarium by Miss Clara Gilbert, Delight, Ark., whose foot was deformed by Infantile Paralysis:

arrived home all right and my friends were greatly surprised to see me walk flat on my foot. When I came to your Sanitarium I walked on my toe. I will gladly answer all questions with regard to my foot.

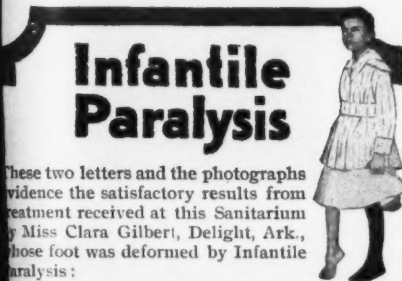
CLARA GILBERT,
Box 43, Delight, Arkansas.

I cannot praise your Sanitarium too highly for your great work. Clara's friends were surprised to see her foot straight. She has been quite a show girl since. We will gladly answer any inquiries in regard to your work for Clara.

MRS. CORDA GILBERT,
Box 43, Delight, Arkansas.

This private institution is devoted to the treatment of children and young adults afflicted with Club Feet, Infantile Paralysis, Spinal Diseases and Curvature, Hip Dislocation, Wry Neck, etc. Our valuable book "Deformities and Paralysis," with Book of References, free.

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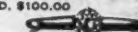
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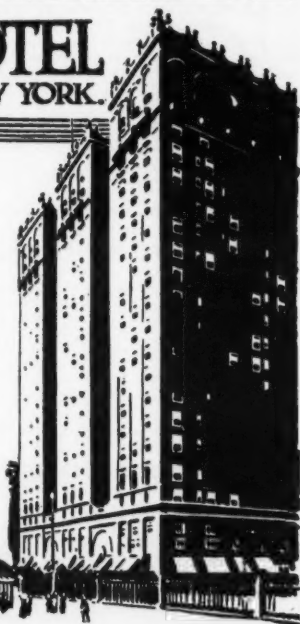
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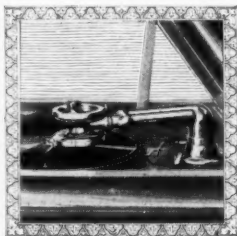
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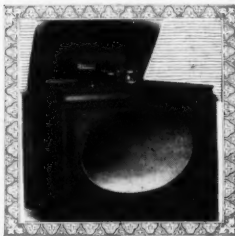
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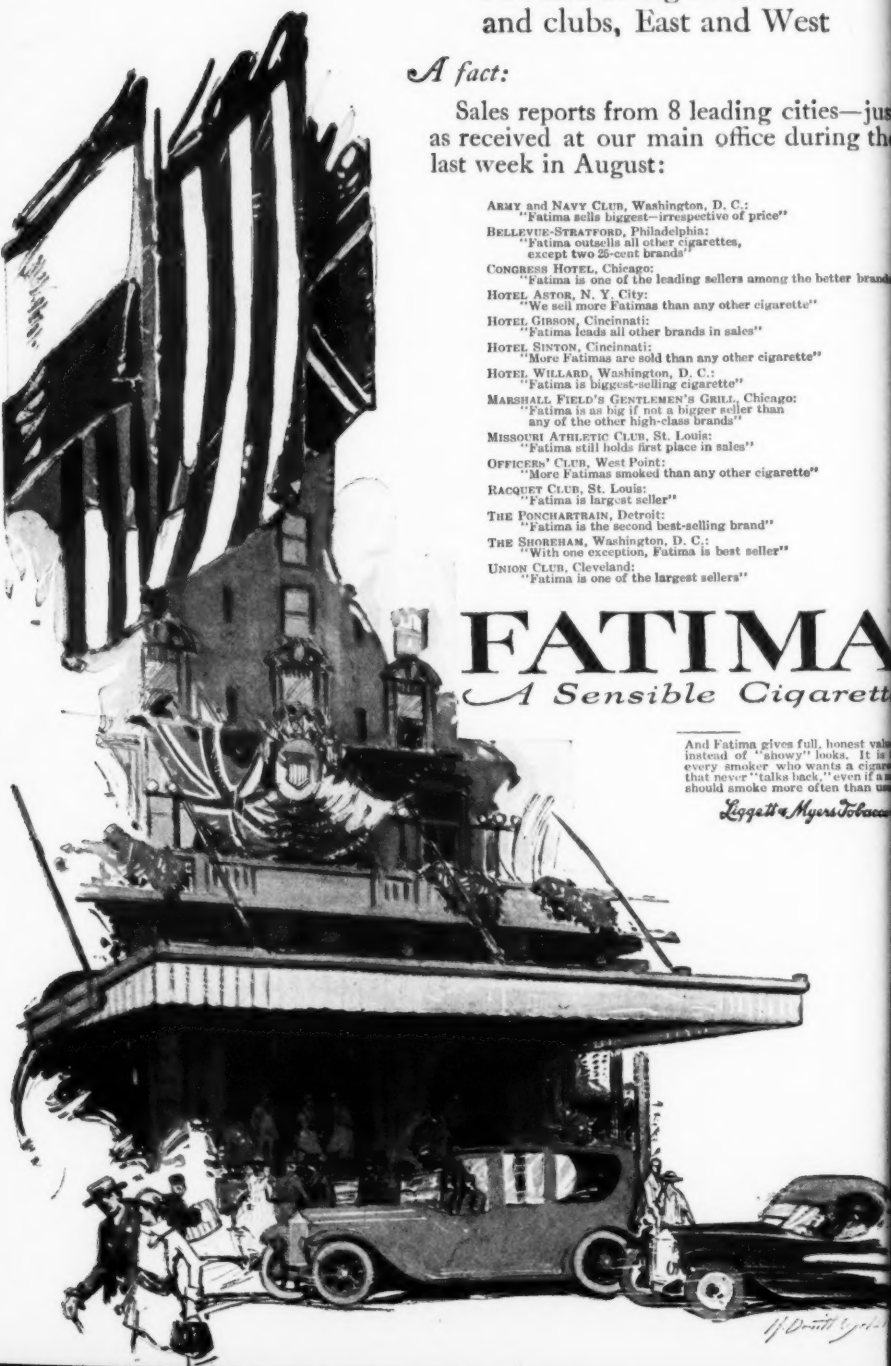
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